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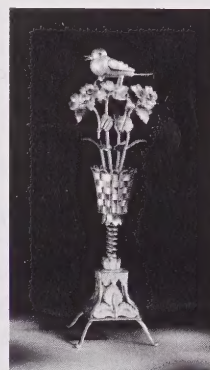
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PHOTOGRAPH BY
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The beautiful forms on the cover are details from a true treasure, a Meissen tea service. Meredith Chilton, curator of The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, writes about the development of tea drinking in Europe, a custom introduced from the East, and the subsequent creation of top quality European porcelain and tea wares suitable for service. Meissen, the factory where the secret of hard-paste porcelain was uncovered, produced ceramics that have been referred to as white gold. The discovery of the formula for this porcelain allowed European manufacturers to create a lucrative market for themselves, thereby breaking the Orient's monopoly. Magnificent Meissen ceramics are on display in the Gardiner.



opening of the T. T. Tsui Galleries of Chinese Art. This suite of galleries is presented in four sections—the new galleries of Ancient China and Early Empire, which lead to the famous Chinese Tomb and Later Empire

galleries. Seven thousand years of Chinese culture come to life through the finest pieces from the Museum's world-renowned collections. My story is intended to give you a sense of the vitality of a culture that has endured about twice as long as Ancient Egypt and indicates no signs of decline. The new galleries show how very early the foundations of Chinese culture were established. For example, kiln-fired ceramics date from approximately 4800 BC; beautiful jades were found in burials from 4000 BC. The accompanying photos only hint at the feast for the eyes that visitors experience.

And the European Judaica Gallery in the north wing of the Samuel European Galleries is open once again with a fascinating array of objects. Corey Keeble, associate curator in the European Department, focuses on spice boxes, used for Havdalah, the ritual marking the end of the Jewish Sabbath. The scent of the spice sweetens the sadness of the Sabbath's closing and heightens the mood. Masterful pieces of craftsmanship, the spice boxes reflect the styles of European decorative metalwork and sometimes the life of the places in which they were created.

Humans can be enormously creative. We also possess the overwhelming ability to affect the world around us for better or worse. I think that this issue of *Rotunda* shows us at our best.

Sandra Shaul

SANDRA SHAUL

Several other special events have recently taken place at the Museum, and these are reflected in the feature stories. To mark the establishment of the Royal Ontario Museum's Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Research, Dr. Norman Myers, one of the world's experts on biodiversity and environmental crises (and an outstanding long-distance runner) was invited to speak. Instead of the doom-and-gloom or theatrical approaches to the world's environmental problems espoused by some conservation groups, Myers presents a very positive and pragmatic attitude. In his view we have the unique opportunity to preserve the world's biodiversity and offers ways in which this can be achieved. His speech was adapted to an article entitled "Biodiversity's Greatest Challenge." Not only did I find his advice sound, but frankly I'll listen to anyone who has run the Mt. Kilimanjaro ultra-plus marathon (62 miles round trip)—two dozen times.

The ROM recently celebrated the

Problem

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Shamash, the sun god, appears on a cylinder seal (top) made of serpentine, from the Akkadian period (c. 2255 to 2154 BC). A selection of cylinder seals dates from the second millennium.

The Gorelick Collection of Ancient Seals

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE

IN DECEMBER 1994 THE WEST ASIAN Department received the most important gift in its history: 90 ancient stamp and cylinder seals known as the Gorelick collection. Over the past few years the department has acquired a number of small, but significant gifts and loans of cylinder and stamp seals of similar culture to those described here. Together these objects form one of North America's outstanding collection of seals. The Gorelick collection, which was published in *The Art of Ancient Man* (The

Brooklyn Museum 1975), also complements the department's collection of inscribed cuneiform tablets, which presents new and exciting opportunities for research as well as display.

The earliest known stamp seals, dating to the seventh or sixth millennia BC, may have been used for marking textiles or even bread. By about 5000 BC they were being pressed into soft clay to indicate ownership of goods. Cylinder seals were introduced in the Uruk period (about 3200 BC) around the same

time as writing. Together writing and sealing were likely developed as a means of accounting and recording the complex affairs of early temple administration. Cylinder seals were rolled over clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing to add a signature and an official status.

The Gorelick collection includes examples of most of the major types and designs produced throughout the entire period of seal manufacture in the ancient Near East. The



Hyksos period scaraboid seals (17th to 16th century BC) are pictured in the upper photo, and a selection of stamp seals from the fourth millennium BC are pictured in the lower.

earliest stamp seals in the collection, from the Jemdet Nasr period (about 3100 BC), bear geometric designs or stylized representations of animals. During the Early Dynastic and Akkadian periods (c. 2800 to 2200 BC), scenes depicting deities and mythological creatures in combat with animals, and banquet scenes were popular. There are 10 seals from this period made of steatite, marble, alabaster, and serpentine.

By 2200 BC and for the next 500 years, the Neo-Sumerian through Old Babylonian periods, the presentation scene was ubiquitous. Typically the owner of the seal, sometimes

identified by an inscription, is being led before a deity or a deified king by an interceding goddess. Fifteen examples from this period come from Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria, and Iran. Most are made of hematite.

The nine seals from the Assyrian period (about 9th to 6th centuries BC) show a return to scenes of combat between kings and animals or mythological creatures. A fine chalcedony seal shows a typical Achaemenid period (about 6th to 5th century BC) theme: a king triumphant over lions and supernatural beasts.

Seven steatite scarabs in the col-

lection (17th to 16th century BC) are amulets with inscriptions and designs on the underside expressing their owner's relationship to a particular god. Sasanian seals (c. AD 220 to 640), a particular favourite of Dr. Gorelick, are represented by 33 seals in chalcedony, carnelian, agate, onyx, and jasper. Typically these are carved with lively depictions of birds, rams, stags, horses, griffins, lions, and scorpions as well as portrait heads.

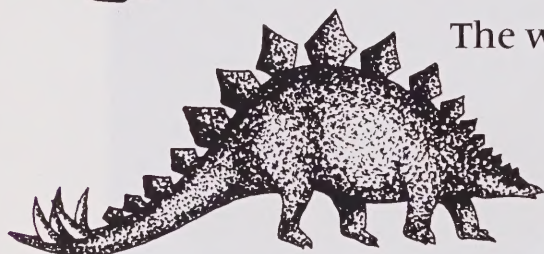
BILL PRATT

*Bill Pratt is a technician
in the West Asian Department*

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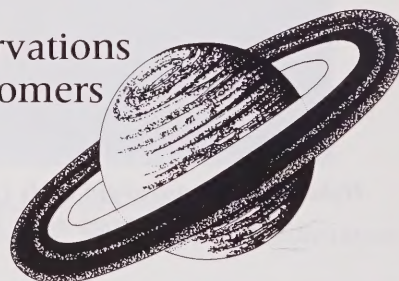


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Oysters, My Love

*"But ah! when I finish the ultimate line
When I've brought to fulfilment
the grand design
When I look at the thing
and it's mine all mine
Then it's Oysters, my love,
with Cold White Wine!"*

JAN MORRIS, TRAVEL WRITER

ALTHOUGH GIOVANNI GIACOMO Casanova consumed 50 oysters a day, the aphrodisiac clout of the bivalve mollusk may have less to do with humans than with the mollusk itself. *Ostrea edulis*, the European oyster, an adroit hermaphrodite, changes sex from male to female and back again at the drop of an osphradium (its olfactory organ). By comparison, *Crassostrea virginica*, the American oyster, is a bit of a prude, sex-changing fitfully and under fussier conditions, as if in terror of being caught in the act.

There is little historic testimony for the notion of the aphrodisiac oyster: Saint Evremond, who lived on the coast of Normandy, ate hundreds of oysters for breakfast and remained virtuous enough for the Vatican. Louis XIV had private oyster beds tended by a man named Hyacinth Ox, but it is for the length of his reign that he is renowned.

The princely mollusk trips across the millennia as lightly as it dances across the stations of the palate. Some oyster beds are 65 million years old. Once upon a time, a 6400-kilometre-long oyster shelf fringed the Atlantic Coast of Europe from Scandinavia south to the Mediterranean, then turned east to France, Italy, and, bypassing the Adriatic, Greece. The intrepid Greeks were the first to cultivate the oyster. Just ask Aristotle.

The Bible neither condones nor condemns the oyster because its authors had never heard of it, nor had the ancient Egyptians. The Romans embraced the oyster fervently, as you would expect. Seneca insisted that oysters were not really food at all, but catalysts for the appetite, and downed 100 dozen a week. After Caesar's legions overran Gaul, the Romans thought they had gone to oyster heaven. Same thing in Britain. Sallust wrote of the Britons: "There is some good in them after all. They have produced an oyster."

The Europeans were afflicted with bivalve amnesia through the Dark Ages, but made up for it after the Renaissance, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, which left the great shelf exhausted. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, the indigenous tribes of both coasts feasted on

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK SEALOCK

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oysters. Ellis Island was Oyster Island before the Dutch purchased it along with Manhattan. The natives cooked them, and can take credit for inventing oyster stew. New World settlers attacked the oyster with such voracity that Atlantic seaboard stocks had dwindled to a small fraction of their original abundance by the end of the 19th century. The era of the all-you-can-eat-for-six-cents oyster was swiftly savoured and slipped down the throat of history.

Nowadays, there are a handful of “families” but hundreds of varieties of oysters. They rank high in the gastronomy, if a notch below the holy trinity of caviar, *foie gras*, and truffles. They are farmed from Brittany and Ireland all the way to Tasmania and Prince Edward Island. The French cherish their *huîtres* more than *frites* and swear by the *belon*. Prince Edward Islanders salute the Malpèque. Pacific Northwesterners covet the minuscule but delicious Olympia.

In the French Quarter of New Orleans, where it is still safe to go walking at night, the superstar of streetfood is the oyster po’boy, also known as the peacemaker because after an all-night jazz and bourbon binge, a husband might mollify his spouse with this toasted loaf of French bread stuffed with fried oysters. The best American bivalves I’ve eaten were at Shuckers, the oyster bar at the Four Seasons Olympic Hotel in Seattle. At Shuckers, half a dozen varieties of oysters are served every night and you can eat them every which way. I ate briny belons raw, dunked lightly in red wine vinegar; and plump Quilcenes pan-fried in butter; and Westcott Points smoked that very day over alderwood, first half a dozen, then a dozen, with an expression so dreamy the waiter asked if I was all right.

I have sweet memories of Down Under: Tasmanian oysters drizzled with ginger and shallot vinaigrette and impeccable Sydney rock oysters served in Qantas business class. But the finest oysters I have ever tasted were on Sketrick Island in County Down, Northern Ireland, farmed by

Jasper Parsons in the pure waters of Stangford Lough. Jasper's oysters, with their salty aroma, audible crunch, savory-sweet cucumber flavour and lingering aftertaste, were *it*. Unfortunately for the Irish, 95 per cent of his harvest is whisked off to dazzle discerning palates in Hong Kong and Singapore.

I prefer my oysters by the dozen, shucked before my eyes, raw, alive, and with a squirt of lemon, not the red goop restaurateurs feel obliged to serve as an accompaniment.

On the other hand, you may be one of those who agreed with Woody Allen when he said, "I will not eat oysters. I want my food dead—not sick, not wounded—dead." In which case, you'll be happy to know that the versatile bivalve can be grilled over charcoal, smoked over wood chips, poached ever so gently in its own juices, coated in Japanese breadcrumbs and pan-fried, and made into soups and stews and sauces and stuffings. The appropriate libation is Champagne,

although sprightly white wines such as Muscadet or Sancerre will do, and if you are in Ireland, anything but Guinness is treason.

And forget Saint Evremond. Oysters will prove aphrodisiac if you think they will, just like any other act of faith.

WARM OYSTERS WITH FRESH SALMON CAVIAR

Recipe created for Rotunda

by Carol Clemens

This sumptuous appetizer marries Atlantic oysters and British Columbia salmon caviar at the height of their seasons.

Ingredients

- 30 ml (2 tbsp.) white onion, finely diced
- 60 ml (4 tbsp.) butter
- 30 ml (2 tbsp.) flour
- 310 ml (1-1/4 cups) dry white wine
- 160 ml (2/3 cup) 18 per cent cream
- 30 oysters, shucked, juices reserved (preferably deep-water

Atlantic species such as Pemaquid or Pine Island)

- 45 ml (3 tbsp.) fresh salmon caviar
- fresh dill

Method

Sweat onion in butter over low heat. Do not brown. When onions are transparent, remove from heat and stir in flour. Return to heat and add wine, stirring constantly. Bring the mixture to a boil, continuing to stir constantly. Reduce heat. Add cream. Simmer for five minutes.

Warm the oysters in their own juices 30 to 40 seconds. Be careful not to overcook. Strain the juices into the cream mixture. Spoon the resulting sauce on six warmed plates. Landscape the oysters attractively on the sauce. Sprinkle the salmon caviar over the sauce. Garnish with fresh dill. Serves six...or two, if you're in the mood.

JEREMY FERGUSON

Jeremy Ferguson is a food and travel writer based in Toronto

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In the May
issue of *Rotunda*...

What Can We Really Learn About Dinosaurs?

By Hans-Dieter
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BIODIVERSITY'S GREATEST CHALLENGE

*Are we faced with environmental breakdown and mass extinction
on the scale that killed the dinosaurs?*

NORMAN MYERS



WORK WITH SCIENTISTS ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND AMONG THEM there is a very strong consensus that 50 to 100 species—perhaps even more—are being lost each day. This is thousands of times the extinction rate before humans came along. Should this pace continue—and it is likely to accelerate unless we do something about it—then within our lifetimes we will likely say goodbye to at least a third, probably half, and conceivably even a greater share of all our fellow species. It would be the greatest mass extinction since that of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. But we can save many of those species, if we really want to.

The actions we take or fail to take on many environmental issues within the next 10 years will effectively determine whether this mass extinction is inevitable. Consider that all other environmental problems, tough as many of them are, are intrinsically reversible: acid rain can be eliminated, the deserts can be pushed back, and the forests, British Columbia's included, can be replanted. We can stop attacking the ozone layer. We can even stabilize climate to avoid global warming. All this might take several centuries; it might even take a thousand years in the case of global warming; it might cost billions or even trillions of dollars. But once

even a single species becomes extinct, no amount of time or money or human effort can ever reverse the process.

Now, some people would say, rightly enough, "But in the fullness of time, evolution will do its thing and come up with replacement species." And so it will. But the fullness of time here would be at least five million years, perhaps several times longer. Five million years is 20 times longer than humans themselves have been a species. Within the next five million years, at least 500 trillion people will live on Earth, and they all will be affected by what we do or don't do within the next decade.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FERRUCCIO

Dr. Norman Myers is one of the world's most respected and influential environmental scientists. He is a pioneer in the field of documenting the destruction of the world's rainforests and of calculating rates of tropical deforestation and probable rates of species extinction. The following is adapted from a lecture that Dr. Myers presented at the ROM on Wednesday 18 October 1995 to mark the opening of the Museum's Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Research.





Tropical forests are central to the issue. They're incredibly rich. They cover only about six per cent of Earth's land surface, an expanse less than Canada, but they contain at least 50, maybe 70, and possibly even 90 per cent of all Earth's species. Costa Rica, about the size of New Brunswick, has half as many species as the whole of Canada. If the rainforests disappear, we lose not only considerable biodiversity but also the benefits it provides, including new medicines and new foods, and we suffer through global warming.

The forests are being destroyed faster than any other ecological zone on Earth, including coral reefs, savannahs, and grass-

lands. According to calculations made with NASA, at least half of the tropical forests have been lost. What remains is disappearing at a rate of 2.0 to 2.5 per

cent per year, and the rate continues to accelerate. In 25 years there won't be very much left.

Looking around the globe, it's a pretty mixed picture. In Southeast Asia many forests are gone; Java has just about nothing left, although the island of New Guinea has lost hardly any of its forests so far. In Africa, Madagascar has lost virtually all forest, as has West Africa; but the Central Zaire Basin is doing fairly well so far. Atlantic coastal forest is 97 per cent gone. But much of Amazonia, except for some areas around the edges, is still somewhat okay. We, for the most part unwittingly, in our role as consumers, are effectively and increasingly contributing to the demise of those forests. Surely we should all join in a great global campaign to help save them and halt the impending mass extinction of species.

When I said that we're losing as many as a hundred or more species per day, I was speaking mainly of animal species, but

it is almost certain that at least five, maybe more, plant species disappear every day also, and with their extinction we are surely losing some anticancer drugs, answers to AIDS, chemical compounds for better contraceptive pills for women and men, and so on.

A pretty little periwinkle grows in the forests of Madagascar. Its dull-looking leaves contain two alkaloids, or biocompounds, which have been used to manufacture a pair of potent drugs against heart disease, Hodgkins Disease, and some other blood cancers. When I was in high school, two fellow pupils failed to turn up at the start of the term. They had been diagnosed with leukaemia, and in those days the chances of recovery were just about zero. Today the rate of remission is 19 cases out of 20, thanks to the potent drugs found in the Madagascan periwinkle.

Cancer experts believe that tropical forests are home to at least another 20 plant species with biocompounds that could be used to create drugs against other forms of the disease, but they will be able to

If the rainforests disappear, we lose not only considerable biodiversity but also the benefits it provides, including new medicines and new foods, and we suffer through global warming

test their theories only if the plants can be acquired before their habitats are destroyed by chainsaws. This is what is at stake for your country and mine when the forests away on the horizon disappear. That is why our future welfare is intimately tied up with the welfare of the tropical forests.

The commercial value of the forests to the world pharmaceutical industry—one present estimate is US\$40 million—carries weight with some political leaders, especially in developing countries, and justifies the preservation of species in tropical forests in terms of dollars and cents. It is a pity, though, that justification is necessary—don't they have just as much right to survival as we do?

There have been local campaigns, for example, India's Project Tiger. By 1970, most of the tiger's range had been elbowed off the face of the planet, and the Indian government decided to count the country's tigers. At the start of the century, there were about 50,000 tigers and it was



estimated that 10,000 or so remained. But alarmingly, the count found only about 1700, and that number was plainly declining fast. In response, Project Tiger was launched.

Project Tiger Reserves are protected areas. The program cost India a little more than \$30 million, with the World Wildlife Fund and one or two other organizations in the richer countries contributing another two to three million dollars. Today the number of tigers in India has at least doubled since 1970. This is something of a success story, and it took place in impoverished and massively overcrowded India, which means that many other countries around the world can be helped to achieve similar successes.

The causes of the destruction of the rainforests can be illustrated with two examples that demonstrate the connection between activities in underdeveloped and developed countries thousands of miles apart. First, the hamburger connection. Around 1960 North Americans began to develop an enormous appetite for cheap

hamburger beef. So great was the demand that the price of beef started to spiral upwards. Both the United States and Canada began to look around for beef cheaper than that available from North American producers. The price in Australia and Argentina was about the same, but in Central America it was only half as much because government forest lands could be had for virtually nothing. The ranchers had only to convert it into cattle pasture by torching it. So some of the forests in Central America, which turn out to be some of the prime locations for anticancer drugs, went up in flames to satisfy marketplace demand for inexpensive beef in North America.

In 1950 Central America was still largely forested. By 1985 the region was mostly deforested—a sad story, but there is a bright ending. Around 1987, some citizen activists in California decided they were going to try to break the hamburger connection. They discovered that the number-one importer of hamburger beef was Burger King, and

they threatened a consumer boycott of the hamburger chain unless it stopped using Central American beef. At first, Burger King did not take the ultimatum seriously, but citizens across the United States and Canada joined and sustained the consumer

boycott until finally, after four years, the giant hamburger chain was humbled. Lost sales had made an impact. The corporation agreed not to import any more beef from Central America. This victory was not achieved by any big government organization, the United Nations, or the World Bank. It was won by ordinary citizens, millions of them, who did not say, "Oh, this problem is so big, and it's so out there, and I'm just one voice. What can I possibly do about it?" Instead, they said, "Hey, I'm an individual. I have an opinion about this issue. I want to make my opinion count in the marketplace. I'm going to register my dollar vote." And they did that until they won.

The greatest torcher of the forests, however, is not actually the rancher, who is confined to Central America and a bit of Amazonia. Throughout

other parts of Latin America and also Africa and Asia, the number-one torcher of the forest is the slash-and-burn cultivator. This is not the shifting cultivator of tradition who could grow crops for only a couple of seasons in one particular place before the soil became depleted and then would have to burn off a new patch of forest. The croplands abandoned by this traditional shifting cultivator would quickly green over with new bushes and new trees. The trees would restore fertility to the soil, and in 20 years the cultivator could come back to that first plot of land and repeat the whole process. There was no long-term damage at all to the forest ecosystems.

Today, instead of shifting cultivators, there are shifted cultivators, or displaced peasants, who find themselves landless in southern Brazil, for example, with no alternative but to pick up machete and matchbox and head off to Amazonia. The same happens in Borneo, southern Thailand, and the Philippines uplands. Great waves of

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landless, impoverished peasants advance at the forest fringe, trampling it through the sheer weight of their numbers. Season by season they penetrate further and deeper into the forest, and behind them come more multitudes of landless peasants, allowing the forest no chance to regenerate. Shifted cultivators are responsible for at least half of all species extinctions taking place, maybe more. They are no more responsible for what they are doing than a soldier is for starting a war. They are driven by forces that they don't understand, and even if they did understand them, they wouldn't have much choice.

What drives the shifted cultivator into the forests? One factor is sheer population growth. Another is poverty. The majority of these people are living off a daily cash income of less than one dollar.



They can't afford to buy a tractor or invest in fertilizer or whatever. Driven by poverty, their only recourse is to cultivate their little plot of land. In most of the areas in question matters are complicated further by a lack of government policies on agriculture and land use and distribution, and a lack of support for subsistence farming.

About two-thirds of world population growth takes place in developing countries. In southwestern Brazil, the state of Rondonia covers about 640,000 square kilometres (250,000 square miles). In 1970, the population was only about 10,000, and most of the land was entirely uninhabited forest, which contained more species than most parts of Amazonia. By 1975 only about 1250 square kilometres of the forest was cleared. In December 1984 an arterial highway with side roads was driven through the forest by the Brazilian government to help small-scale farmers penetrate deeply into the forest. A year later, the side roads reached much further

into the forest. Funding came in part from the World Bank. The following year I obtained a 1986 image of this same area from NASA—25,000 square kilometres of forest had virtually disappeared in the space of about 11 or 12 years. By 1990, there were 2.5 million people in Rondonia and one-third of the forest cover had already been destroyed together with, I imagine, thousands of species of animals and plants.

As if the extinction of species were not enough, when the forests are burned by the slash-and-burn cultivators, they send great columns of smoke high into the sky. A tree is half carbon; therefore, when it burns, huge amounts of carbon dioxide are unleashed into the atmosphere. The build-up of carbon dioxide in the sky is responsible for half of global warming processes. In the words of Maurice Strong, a noted Canadian environmentalist, "The winds carry no passports. What happens over the skies of Brazil will affect climate right around South America, right around the southern hemisphere and the rest of the world as well." The future of your grain

When the forests are burned by slash-and-burn cultivators, they send great columns of smoke high into the sky, contributing to carbon dioxide emissions responsible for half of global warming processes

lands in the prairies is going to be affected by all the global warming caused by the burning of Amazonia.

Scientists are convinced that global warming has started. In coming years, areas of the United States and Canada could receive 30 to 60 per cent less rainfall. The temperature, especially in summer during the growing season, will be warmer and that would be okay if there were more rainfall to compensate for the increased evaporation. But the expectation is that there will be a lot less rainfall, year after year, without any respite. The great grain belt could start to unbuckle, and the same will be true for some other great bread baskets, such as France and the western part of the former Soviet Union. Australia will do rather better. Argentina might become wetter rather than drier. However, there are areas that feed well over 100 countries and they could be in for really hard times.

Global warming: a good part of it is coming from chopping down and burning the

forests in Amazonia, Borneo, and Madagascar, but only about one-third of carbon emissions come from this source. The great bulk originates with the use of fossil fuels in the industrialized world—to run factories and heat buildings, and especially to power cars and other vehicles. However, tropical deforestation is accelerating while the combustion of fossil fuels is now starting to slow down a little bit. Within ten years, these two processes could be equally responsible for the disruption of climate for all countries.

The build-up of human numbers can lead to the build-down of species numbers. The world population increases by 250,000 per day. In this decade there are an additional 90 million people on the Earth each year. And of each 90 million, 85 or 86 million are in the developing countries. But those three to four million new arrivals in the developed countries account for combustion of a huge amount of fossil fuels, which kick carbon into the air, leading to global warming. Those three to four million will cause more global pollution and global



warming than all 86 million extra people in the Third World. So we might ask who else, besides underdeveloped countries, has a population problem?

The human population of the Earth is currently about six billion. If we continue to increase at the current rate, we'll eventually have over 10 billion people and severe overcrowding. The situation will be further aggravated if any more countries drop family planning, as the Philippines has.

A more optimistic projection shows that the population will increase until 2025, when the total will start to decline. To realize this scenario, more countries must follow the example of Thailand. In 1970, the average family in Thailand had seven children. Today, it has only two children. The Thai have achieved a population miracle in just 25 years. When my country—England—was a developing country, it wasn't at all unusual for families to have seven or eight children, and it took 100 years for the British to realize that maybe two children

are enough, provided that they stayed alive. The people in Thailand have managed that breakthrough in just 25 years. And a lot of other countries, including South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, and two states in India, are edging towards this condition.

The Thai population miracle was based upon at least as much education for girls as for boys, at least as much employment opportunity for women as for men, and general upgrading of the status of women

There are approximately 2.5 billion sexually active people in the world. Sexual couplings per night are estimated at 100 million. What is much more important are the statistics on conception: one-half of all pregnancies are unplanned and one-quarter of all children born are unwanted. In this regard, there's hardly a country in the world that can really consider itself developed. I did a little research for the Cairo Conference on Population a year ago, and I was surprised to learn that in Britain there has been a recent surge in the number of teenagers giving birth, and the rate is rising rapidly. The only area that's worse is California. I can not think how we can call ourselves developed nations as long as that kind of absurdity persists.

How can we get people to follow the example of Thailand? The Thai success was based upon at least as much education for girls as for boys, at least as much employment opportunity for women as for men, and general upgrading of the status of women throughout society. There seems also to have been a considerable expansion of family-planning services and related programs.

At the very least, two billion births could be prevented if the needs of 120 million couples in developing countries were met. These people—and they comprise 20 per cent of all developing-world couples—do not want more children but lack the family-planning facilities to fulfill that wish. Even if there were no population or environmental problems, people should have the opportunity to plan the size of their family. You might say that it would be too expensive to meet their needs. In fact, if the rich nations were to pick up their usual 25 per cent of the tab, the cost per citizen in Canada, as in Britain, would be a penny per day.

The operative phrase here is self control. How do people actually want to live? It's not just sheer human numbers that count, it's also how people want to support themselves: how much affluence they want to enjoy, how many resources they will chew up, how much population they will cause along the way.

Let's look at some sources of global warming in the developed world with this in mind. As stated before, one-third of global warming is caused by the burning of the rainforests; the balance comes from burning fossil fuels in the developed world. The United States is in a class of its own in terms of carbon emissions. Americans ac-

count for five per cent of the world's population and 25 per cent of all carbon emissions. Why? Because the price of gasoline in the United States is

ed cultivators and their rampant destruction of the rainforests. A successful recourse for such people as well as for established farmers was found in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Terraces for rice irrigation were built by the World Bank, with some contribution from the Indonesian government, at a cost of \$60 million in 1975.

Regular, year-round flow of irrigation waters made it possible for regional farmers to grow three and sometimes four crops of rice per year. They were averaging more rice per acre than the Japanese. Moreover, because they could produce so much food in a small area, there was less incentive for the farmers to pick up machete and matchbox and head off to the tropical forests on the hillsides located nearby. Everything seemed perfect except that no one thought to ask where the irrigation water originated. It was assumed that it came from the watersheds created when the forest cover soaked up water in the wet season, which was then released in steady, reliable amounts throughout the dry season. Nobody thought to ask about



**It's not just sheer human numbers that count,
it's also how people want to support themselves;
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how many resources they will chew up**

far, far less than in any other industrialized nation. Petrol is cheaper than bottled water in the supermarket, yet Americans seem to think that if the price were increased by even a dime a gallon, the economy would go for a loop.

But lest Americans think I'm having a real dig at them, let's look across the pond. A composite satellite photo taken of Britain, Spain, and Italy at three o'clock in the morning shows an incredible number of lights. It has been calculated that half or even two-thirds of those lights could be switched off with no decline whatsoever in human welfare. The electricity for the lights is produced by burning coal and oil, and that means more global warming. Furthermore, if the lights were switched off, it would save money. We in Europe would end up with more cash in our pockets, and we would have less acid rain and less urban smog. There would be less global warming in the long run.

Earlier I discussed the dilemma of shift-

the water source and nobody thought to ask about the condition of the forests.

In fact, the forests were being slashed and burned by landless peasants, and by 1980, just five years after the irrigation project began, a water shortage hit the rice paddies because of disruption in the forest watersheds and hydrological systems. The World Bank was upset because it could see its \$60-million investment disappearing. Naturally enough, the rice growers were upset. And the local Indonesian branch of the World Wildlife Fund was upset because the forests were a unique habitat for a number of species. If the forests disappeared, goodbye species. When the World Bank heard about the concerns of the World Wildlife Fund, it offered to meet. This was the first time that a development agency proposed to join in common cause with a conservation group. The World Bank, recognizing the expertise of the World Wildlife Fund in saving forests and reforestation, asked what it would cost

to restore the forests on the hilltops. The World Wildlife Fund, thinking their estimate of at least a million dollars to be prohibitive, did not hold out much hope. But this was chicken feed for the World Bank. So the World Wildlife Fund took the million dollars and spent it mostly on relocating the slash-and-burners inside the forest in an area where they could gain a sustainable lifestyle by other means. Today the forest cover has regenerated splendidly.

We need to identify other such success stories and replicate them time and again to solve the tropical forest problem. There is intent on the part of the global community of nations to do a better job of saving tropical forests. Various countries, including Canada, are pitching in. India has declared the loss of its forests a national emergency. Indonesia is welcoming help from the ROM and others to manage its forest.



There are many more initiatives at the grass-roots level. Two hundred conservation groups in Sri Lanka join forces when approaching the government. The president of Sri Lanka knows it is worth his political while to listen to the leaders of citizen groups. Equally effective citizen groups exist in Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Kenya. In 1986, the number of rainforest action groups in the United States was 17. Today, it is 286 and growing.

You may ask, "What can I do in Canada to put my shoulder to the wheel?" Here's a list of what you might want to consider. First of all, support the conservation group of your choice. It could be the World Wildlife Fund, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, or any one of a host of others. At the ROM there is the new Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Research, which requires funds to do its work in Vietnam and Indonesia and in other countries with tropical forests. Of course, lobby your government. Tell your politicians how you feel.

Look at your own lifestyle. When you brush your teeth tonight, have a look in the mirror and ask yourself what you might have done today as a consumer that may

be similar to the hamburger connection. Altogether unintentionally but with deadly effect, you may be fuelling those chainsaws at work far over the horizon.

As individuals, in our own back yards, we can learn to tread more lightly on the face of the Earth in all kinds of ways. It may not help the tropical forests, but it will help preserve the biodiversity in Canada. Use efficient light bulbs, get your car tuned, leave the car in the garage, take the bus, and so on. Last year I discovered that people in Holland consider it as antisocial to turn up in a car on one's own as it is to walk into somebody's house and immediately light up a cigarette.

To paraphrase Charles Dickens, it is the worst of times, it is the best of times...we have nothing before us, we have everything before us. Upon hearing of the extinction of the dodo, Charles Darwin stated in a diary entry that he would have sacrificed five years of his professional life to have mounted a campaign to save the bird. Suppose Darwin were alive today—wouldn't he be horrified at the number of species disappearing every single day. But

wouldn't he also be elated to have the chance to join hands with people all around the world to save species in their millions—indeed, in their tens of millions.

Sometimes when people ask me if I am still hopeful, I think of all the problems. But then I remember how ordinary people broke the hamburger connection and how the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia rescued the rice growers, and many other such triumphs. In a way, we're privileged. Our generation has the glorious opportunity of saving the planetary ecosystem. No future human generation will ever have such a chance, because if we fail, there will be nothing left to save. Frightening, yes, but exhilarating too. We live at an appalling hour, to be sure, but it is also an hour in which we can accomplish great things. So, yes, I am still hopeful. In fact, I'm delighted to be part of a great global community trying to save fellow species that are waiting to hear from us. Should we send them a message? ♡

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THE T. T. TSUI GALLERIES OF CHINESE ART



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE

*With the completion of the Ancient China
and Early Empire galleries, 7000 years of Chinese culture
is revealed at the ROM*

SANDRA SHAUL

*Things of the past which are not forgotten
serve to instruct in later times.*

SIMA QIAN, HISTORIAN C. 145 TO 90 BC

THE ENTRANCE TO THE T. T. TSUI GALLERIES OF CHINESE ART OFFERS VISITORS the heady opportunity to gaze upon and feel the vitality of 7000 years of Chinese culture. Figures of warriors, a mounted polo player, animated camels and horses, and stately guardians appear to pose in front of a modern grey office building visible through the windows beyond the ROM's famous Chinese Tomb. Even though they are worlds apart, there is an immediate sense of continuity between the foreign civilization represented inside the gallery walls and the contemporary culture existing outside them.

Earthenware images of powerful horses (AD 695-725) and imposing guardians (AD 695-715) appear to link with the contemporary world. George Crofts Collection.



Seven thousand years is an extraordinary length of time for a civilization to endure. Ancient Egypt spanned a period of more than 3000 years. The Western Roman Empire lasted just under 500 years.

In China, values associated with the state, the family, and the individual have remained intact from the earliest days. Objects from the most ancient times to

Sandra Shaul is executive editor of Rotunda magazine

the present remain relevant and valued. Through periods of prosperity, social stability, economic upheaval, and war, there remains a sense of history and a solid core of traditions and values that is truly awesome.

The T. T. Tsui Galleries of Chinese Art are presented in four sections: the new galleries of Ancient China and Early Empire, which lead to the well-known Chinese Tomb and Later Empire galleries. They are neighbours to the Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art and the displays of sculpture of south and southeast Asia.

With the completion of the new galleries, which cover the Neolithic (beginning about 5000 BC) to the end of the Tang dynasty (AD 618 to 907), the Museum can display its finest pieces of Chinese art, complemented by writings, reproductions of historic graphics, and artists' reconstructions to tell a story of China from the Neolithic period until the demise of the Empire in 1912.

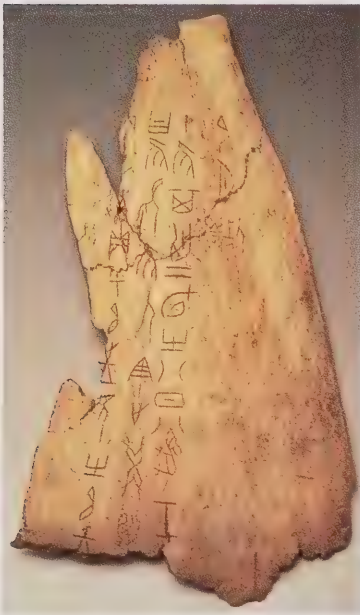
Think of what is most often associated today with Chinese culture. The new galleries clearly show how early the foundations were established. Elements of writing are known from before 2000 BC. Kiln-fired ceramics date from approximately 4800 BC. The first vessels were simple but elegant in form, with a broad range of shapes, decoration, and sizes, and were used for cooking, storage, eating, and drinking. Beautiful jades, found in burials from 4000 BC, were dedicated to the afterlife.

Bronze production began before 1600 BC. For centuries bronze was the material of status, used primarily for ritual vessels and for weapons. While broken ceramics were thrown away, bronzes were carefully mended. Divinations carved on animal bones in the late Shang dynasty (c. 1400 to 1100 BC), the earliest historical records found, show that people lived in a stratified society with divisions of labour, they believed in an afterlife, and they relied upon ritual to modify their fate.

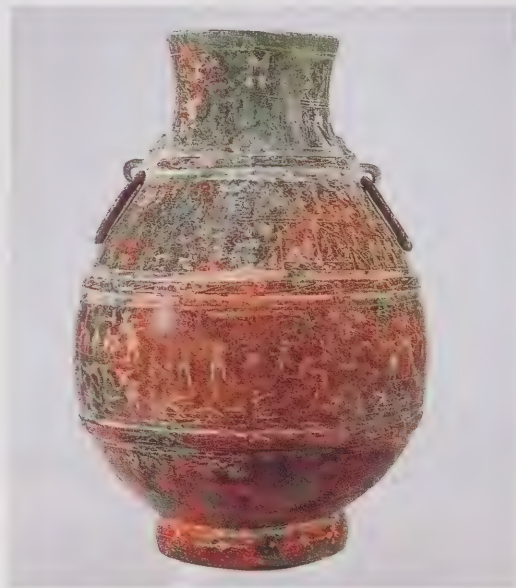
The displays that I enjoy most in the new galleries deal with "aspects of life" from the Eastern Zhou of Ancient China, and the Han and Tang dynasties of the Early Empire. It is in these displays that artifacts, graphics, and text work together to create vivid pictures of life from those times.

A bronze wine vessel (500 to 350 BC) is the centrepiece of the Eastern Zhou display. It has four bands of decoration showing archery, warfare, music, and hybrid animals and human figures in motion. Cases extending on either side of the vessel display objects, often like those portrayed on the large bronze, on the subjects of warfare, music, banquets, and luxury. The endless rules of banqueting, some of which are repeated in the banquet case, would warm the heart of the late Emily Post. For example, adding condiments to food is considered an insult to the

A superb jade dragon-form pendant (500-400 BC) has an eye curiously portrayed as a circle in a square. Dr. Herman Herzog Levy Bequest Fund.



This oracle bone (c. 1300 BC) is the only known divination recording an incorrect prediction. George Crofts Collection. A bronze wine vessel (500-350 BC), which is the centrepiece of the Eastern Zhou display, has four bands of decoration showing archery, warfare, music, and hybrid animal and human figures in motion.



host, and food should not be gobbled, drinks gulped, or half-eaten fish returned to the serving dish. On the subject of music, the Marquis Wen of Wei, quoted from the *Book of Rites* (c. 200 BC), asks a disciple of Confucius: "If I put on an official cap and listen to ancient temple music, I am afraid I will fall asleep. If I listen to the fashionable music of string and wind instruments, I do not tire of it. May I presume to ask why the ceremonial music makes me that way and why the popular music makes me this way?"

The Early Empire, which began in the Qin (221 to 206 BC) developed in earnest during the Han (206 BC to AD 220). With the establishment of the Silk Roads, the arts and trades flourished as the Chinese encountered Greco-Roman, Persian, and Indian civilizations. Mahayana Buddhism was introduced to China through missionaries, scriptures, drawings, and small images from Kushan courts of India and Pakistan.

Access to the jade fields of Central Asia created great demand. Massive amounts of jade were placed in Han tombs to prevent decay of the bodies and to

An impressive procession of earthenware tomb warrior figures from various eras of the Tang dynasty shows changing styles in military dress and weaponry.



ensure immortal life. Shrouds of jade come from this era. Han bronzes were plentiful and varied; however, lacquer and iron wares were becoming more popular. Iron was admired for its strength; lacquer, in addition to its beauty, was resistant to water, acid, heat, and insects, and was therefore useful for coffins, tableware, and later for Buddhist images.

Among the most delightful exhibits are scenes from everyday life created with earthenware figurines. The figurines of people, animals, buildings, and equipment

were buried in tombs to serve and sustain the deceased. Today they are the best illustration of how people dressed and lived. Throughout the ROM and the Gardiner, figurines—be they objects from tombs of China or Egypt, toys made by Canadian settlers, or table decorations from Europe—bring to light the threads of humanity, spun and woven worldwide throughout the ages.

If culture started to blossom in the Han dynasty, it was in full bloom during the Six Dynasties and Tang (AD 220 to 907). During much of this period there was great political upheaval resulting in the country's division. The ROM has one of the finest collections of military figurines from this time. Displayed in chronological order, these objects show changing fashion in apparel and weaponry. The north and south of China finally reunited in the Sui dynasty (AD 581 to 618), which paved the way for the very prosperous Tang. Two themes about daily existence are highlighted in the exhibits: the vogue for things foreign and the good life.

Under the early Tang emperors China controlled the Silk Roads, and fleets of ships plied the sea routes of the southern oceans. The Chinese welcomed all kinds of foreign imports and ideas. Foreign traders, entertainers, diplomats, and students flocked to China's ports and cities, and their exotic faces became popular subjects for Chinese pottery. Foreign apparel was adopted when it proved more practical



Earthenware animal figurines from the Han dynasty are part of a vignette showing life on the farm.



Four delightful earthenware figures illustrate life in the Tang dynasty. A foreigner (AD 700-750) is distinguished by his beard and wineskin. George Crofts Collection. A female polo player (AD 695-715) represents the independence of women in China at this time as well as the popularity of this sport. Dr. Herman Herzog Levy Bequest Fund. A saucy camel responds to his cameleer (c. AD 695-725). George Crofts Collection.

for certain activities than traditional Chinese dress. For example, long coats worn over the shoulders with the sleeves hanging empty are pictured on stone reliefs carved more than 2500 years ago at Persepolis, Iran. This style travelled east and west over the centuries from Hungary to Central Asia to China.

While Indian Buddhism remained the most dominant foreign religion, Jews, Muslims, Manicheans, Zoroastrians, and Nestorian Christians all lived and freely worshipped in Tang China until the persecution of foreign religion in the 9th century.

China's military might during the Tang bred confidence, created sound systems of government, and provided security. An unprecedented amount of wealth sustained a very luxurious lifestyle for the elite. Bactrian camels and Mongolian horses were prized possessions. *The Official History of the Tang Dynasty* records that "In AD 643, the chief of the Sir-Tarduch Turks sent his nephews to present 50,000 horses,



10,000 camels, and 100,000 sheep in request for marriage to a Chinese princess. Request granted.” Among my favourite ceramic pieces in the Museum’s collections are those representing camels and horses. They so astutely capture the outlandish appearance of the camels with their odd-shaped and floppy humps and cocky expressions, and the sheer power of the horses.

Two outstanding human figures are of a female polo player and of an extremely beautiful and graceful dancer. Women were not cloistered; rather they often enjoyed considerable freedom and power. The many figurines displayed also reveal changing ideals in feminine beauty.

In the midst of this feast for the eyes is a wonderful poem. In AD 825, Bai Juyi, governor of Suzhan, wrote:

*In the clear dawn, I face a desk piled with paper,
In the golden sunset I finally get away,
It's such a shame to spend the day,
Chained to the office.*

An outstanding earthenware figure of a dancer dressed in a blue and white costume (c. AD 725-730) represents the good life of the Tang dynasty. Dr. Herman Herzog Levy Bequest Fund. She is accompanied by other dancers and female figures in various poses.



Such voices from the past are a constant reminder that the symbols of cultures are only a layer covering the common ties that bind humanity. The galleries transcend time and place in their expression of the human experience. ❖

The Royal Ontario Museum is grateful to Mr. T. T. Tsui whose generous contribution has made possible the development of these galleries.

AN EARLY HISTORY OF TEA AND TEA WARES IN EUROPE

*"The impertinent
novelty of the age ...
an excellent drink
called Tay"*

MEREDITH CHILTON



IN 1660, THOMAS GARWAY, THE shrewd owner of the Sultaness' Head, a famous London coffee house, placed an advertisement in the London *Gazette* for the latest and most fashionable drink, tea. He hailed its arrival in the metropolis by claiming that consumers of this wondrous new beverage would find a miraculous cure for "headache, stone, gravel, dropsy, scurvy, sleepiness, loss of memory, looseness or gripping of the guts, heavy dreams and collick proceeding from wind." Furthermore, he assured his customers, "If you are of corpulent body it ensures good

Meredith Chilton is curator of The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art





Samuel Johnson
described himself
as "a hardened
and shameless tea
drinker who for
twenty years diluted
his meals with only
the infusion of the
fascinating plant;
whose kettle has
scarcely time to
cool; who with tea
amused the evening,
with tea solaced the
midnight and with
tea welcomed
the morning"



Preceding pages:

An English Family at Tea,
c. 1720, Joseph van Aken
(c. 1699-1749)

Grouped around a tea table,
a fashionably dressed English
family and their servants
prepare to drink tea and
chocolate. On the table is a
Chinese Yixing red stoneware
teapot, a milk jug which might
be salt-glazed stoneware, and
a selection of Chinese porce-
lain tea bowls and saucers.

A smart lacquer box, which
sits on the carpet, has space
for two canisters, one for
green tea and one for black.

appetite, and if you have a surfeit it is just
the thing to give you a gentle vomit." With
such recommendations, it is no wonder
that the fashion for tea swept Europe in the
17th century.

Tea was first consumed as a vegetable in
ancient China. Its usefulness as a medicine
was known by the 3rd century BC. Gradu-
ally tea evolved as the favoured beverage of
the Chinese. Towards the middle of the
Tang dynasty, in about AD 780, tea became
the subject of a specialized book, *Ch'a
Ching*, which gave instruction on every as-
pect of the growing, preparation, and
drinking of tea. On the matter of suitable
daily consumption, readers were informed
that "For exquisite freshness and vibrant
fragrance, limit the number of cups to
three. If one may be satisfied with less than
perfection, five are permissible."

Cultivated in a warm climate, the best
tea shrubs are planted on hills more than
1525 metres (5000 feet) above sea level.
The higher the ground, the better the tea.
Tea shrubs are kept small to allow for easy
picking. The tender young leaves are gath-
ered every 20 to 40 days, and are
then processed in different ways,
depending upon the type of tea de-
sired. Green teas are steamed,
rolled by hand, and then heated to
prevent fermentation; black teas
are withered and fermented prior
to heating. In the 17th and 18th
centuries, both types of tea were
consumed in Europe. Names were
given to different grades and types
of tea: popular black teas included
Pekoe (the most expensive), Sou-
chong, Congou, and Bohea; the
most sought-after green teas were
Imperial Hyson and Gunpowder.
The cheapest was a green tea dust
called Singlo.

Once direct trade was estab-
lished, at the beginning of the 17th
century, vast quantities of tea were
shipped to Europe from China, and
enormous fortunes were made by
European east India companies. In
1703 the British East India Compa-
ny ship *Kent* carried 34,091 kilos
(75,000 lbs.) of Singlo; 9100 kilos
(20,000 lbs.) of Bohea, and 4550 ki-
los (10,000 lbs.) of Imperial Hyson.
The Singlo was purchased for one
shilling per pound in China; upon
its arrival in London 12 months lat-

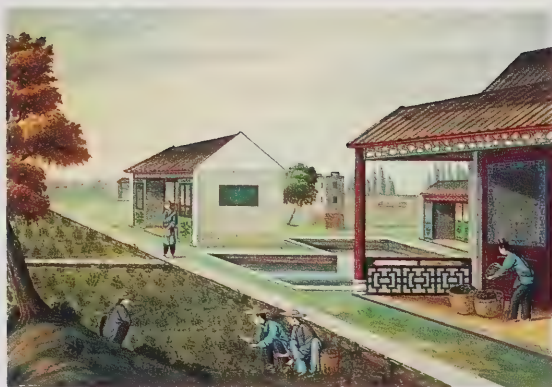
er, it sold at auction for 16 shillings per
pound, while the Hyson fetched 36
shillings per pound. Because of the great
expense of this luxurious beverage, the
same tea leaves were brewed several times,
and the most expensive teas were kept
locked in special canisters.

The time for drinking tea and the way
in which it was consumed varied from
country to country. Generally, tea was tak-
en twice a day, in the morning after rising,
and then again after dinner in the after-
noon. Dinner during this period was
usually served at about 3 pm. Such rules of
behaviour were not followed by tea addicts,
such as Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), who
described himself as "a hardened and
shameless tea drinker who for twenty years
diluted his meals with only the infusion of
the fascinating plant; whose kettle has
scarcely time to cool; who with tea amused
the evening, with tea solaced the midnight
and with tea welcomed the morning."

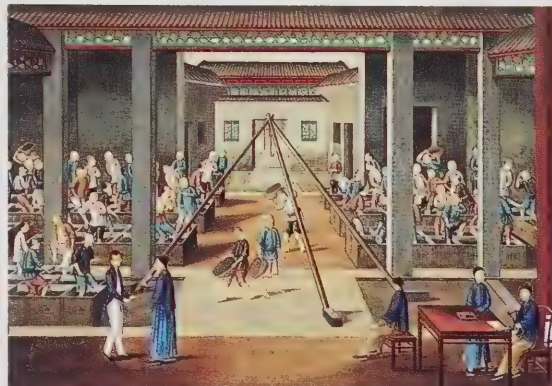
As the fashion and taste for tea spread,
it gradually began to replace ale and beer
as the favoured drink of the working classes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN BOYLE





Picking Tea (top) and Tea Being Stamped into Packing Chests (bottom), Chinese, artist unknown, 19th century. After picking and processing, tea in China was stamped into packing chests, which contained up to 293 kilos. It was then transported to the great tea market at Hankow. From there, tea to be exported was carried to Canton where it was sold to the European east India companies.



Bowl, Teapot, and Tea Canister, glazed stoneware with unfired gilding and polished cut stoneware; the canister has silver mounts; unmarked; German, Meissen; c. 1710-1715; Anonymous collection and The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. Melding East Asian and European styles, tea wares were among Meissen's earliest creations.



"Put it to the test with
a lean hog. Give him
15 bushels of malt
and he will repay
you with tenscore of
bacon. But give him
730 tea messes and
nothing else, and
at the end of about
seven days he is
dead with hunger"

William Cobbett

Portrait of William Cobbett (1763-1835),
possibly by George Cooke



This met with general disapproval from contemporary critics. William Cobbett (1763-1835), a radical British politician and reformer, thought tea had no benefit for the working classes. "Put it to the test," he wrote, "with a lean hog. Give him 15 bushels of malt and he will repay you with tenscore of bacon. But give him 730 tea messes and nothing else, and at the end of about seven days he is dead with hunger."

The huge popularity of tea in the 18th century led to increased taxes, smuggling, and the widespread manufacture of fake teas. Fake teas were called "smouch" in England and posed a serious threat to public health. A description of the process was given at a British parliamentary inquiry of 1784. First, ash leaves were dried in the sun, then baked. Then they were "put on the floor and trod on until the leaves are small, then lifted and steeped in co-operas (a liquid made green with

COURTESY NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



the addition of copper) and sheep's dung... after which they are fit for use." Another swindle was to purchase used tea leaves from the houses of the wealthy or from coffee houses: these were stiffened with gum and either blackened with lead or given a green appearance with poisonous verdigris. One wonders how anyone survived to drink a second cup.

By the end of the 17th century, tea drinking had become a fashionable occupation of the wealthy in Europe. Tea tables were adorned with rich silver tea kettles, exquisitely moulded Chinese red stoneware teapots, and delicate Chinese or Japanese porcelain cups, all imported at great cost from East Asia along with the tea itself.

Not only tea, but the imported tea wares were extremely expensive. An 18th-century lady, who loved both tea and porcelain, but was married to a man who cared for neither and had broken her tea wares, complained: "His destroying



*Teapot, hard-paste porcelain with gilding; unmarked; German, Meissen; c. 1724; the decoration Dresden or Augsburg c. 1724; Anonymous collection. In 1724, Meissen acquired a large number of models from Augsburg. The model for this extraordinary baroque teapot, inspired by an engraving in Jacques Stella's *Livre des Vases*, 1667, may have been among them.*



Tea and Coffee Service, hard-paste porcelain with lustre, enamel decoration, and gilding; gilt metal knobs on tea canister; marks: K.P.M. and crossed swords in underglaze blue on teapot and sugar canister; gilder's mark "15"; German, Meissen; c. 1724-1725; the mounts and silver gilt probably Augsburg, c. 1724-1725; Anonymous collection. The concept of a matching porcelain tea service originated at Meissen about 1723. Charming and whimsical chinoiserie scenes decorate these delicate bowls and saucers.



Tea Bowl and Saucer,
hard-paste porcelain
with enamel decoration;
unmarked;

German, Meissen,
c. 1713-1717;
decorated in Dresden,
c. 1713-1717;

Anonymous collection.
This extremely rare tea
bowl and saucer is
decorated with some of
the earliest fired enamel
colours on European
hard-paste porcelain.

The colours were
developed by Georg
Funke, a Dresden
goldsmith, in 1713.

Tea and Chocolate Service in a Leather Case, hard-paste porcelain with yellow ground, enamel decoration, and gilding; velvet-lined leather case; marks: crossed swords in underglaze blue and gilder's mark "D"; German, Meissen; c. 1740-1745; The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. Fashionable tea services were sometimes presented as diplomatic gifts or as part of a lady's dowry. Fitted in special leather cases, these spectacular services could be displayed to reveal the wealth and taste of the owner.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN BOYLE



of 'em has brought me so low that I have no more apparel than I at present have on, and I *will* have tea cups and saucers if I pawn my very shift, for I must own I love teas as well as he loves Rum!" According to another woman "A tea table costs more to maintain than a nurse and two children."

European scientists and ceramists realized that if they could uncover the secret of making porcelain, they could create a less expensive product and capture the European market. High-fired ceramics, such as stoneware and porcelain, are vital for brewing tea because they do not crack when filled with boiling water. In about 1680, Arij de Milde (1634-1708) of Delft and, shortly afterwards, John Dwight (c. 1635-1703) of Fulham succeeded in imitating Chinese Yixing red stonewares. Dwight's "Opacous, Redd and Dark coloured Porcelanne" was soon copied by John and David Elers (fl. 1686-1700), who set up shop in Staffordshire where they made careful reproductions of Chinese wares for the English market, including "red theapotts."

Red stoneware was first made in Germany at Dresden in 1707 by Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719). Böttger had been diverted from his alchemic quest to manufacture gold by his patron, Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1694-1733). Some of the first objects Böttger created were tea wares. The Dresden court silversmith, Johann Jacob Irminger (1635-1724), made models for Böttger that were inspired by the distinctive baroque style popular at the Saxon court. Böttger also copied Chinese ceramic, soapstone, and lacquer forms from the royal collections.

In general, traditional Chinese and Japanese forms for tea wares were adapted by Europeans. However, unlike East Asians, Europeans drank tea with sugar and sometimes with milk, so some new shapes had to be created. These were usually inspired by existing silver forms. Sometimes early Meissen teapots show a surprisingly successful and charming mixture of classic Chinese forms with baroque ornament; very rarely, pure baroque shapes are found with

little or no reference to a Chinese form.

Böttger soon created an innovative lustrous black glaze for his stoneware, which was sometimes ornamented with gold, silver, or unfired colours. Closely resembling East Asian lacquers, some pieces reveal the delicate hand of the decorators, who gracefully embellished wares with trailing branches of leaves or flowers. As the decoration was not fired, it has seldom survived intact. Consequently, these rare decorated pieces are highly prized. Other pieces were left unglazed, but were burnished or cut and polished by Dresden glasscutters, who were specially contracted for this work.

Just two years after he made his first stonewares, Böttger succeeded in creating the first hard-paste porcelain in Europe. Delighted by his success, Augustus the Strong established the Meissen factory in 1710. Tea wares are among the earliest forms found in porcelain; they were often made in the same moulds as the stonewares. Early wares were embellished with gold and a limited number of enamel colours by independent decorators in Dresden and later in Augsburg.

A few years later, a young artist, Johann Gregor Höroldt (1696-1775) was to transform Meissen porcelain with a brilliant palette of 16 fired enamel colours. Höroldt also introduced his whimsical vision of East Asia, which charmed and delighted wealthy tea drinkers across Europe who avidly acquired the delicately decorated, fashionable porcelain. Close examination of wares and vases made at Meissen during this early period often reveals scenes of tea being prepared and enjoyed in imaginary and idyllic settings.

The concept of a matching service of tea wares, with which we are so familiar today, originated at Meissen between 1723 and 1725. At first, a coffee pot, or sometimes one for chocolate, would be included in the service, and the handleless cups would be used for both beverages. Fairly quickly a distinction was made between low, handleless bowls for tea, and tall beakers, which sometimes had handles, for coffee or chocolate. Handles were introduced for tea bowls in the 1740s, but it was not until the end of the 18th century, when the prohibitive taxes on tea had been repealed and tea became widely accessible, that handles were universally used for European tea wares, a fashion that survives to this day. ♡

"A tea table costs more to maintain than a nurse and two children."

European scientists and ceramists realized that if they could uncover the secret of making porcelain, they could create a less expensive product and capture the European market

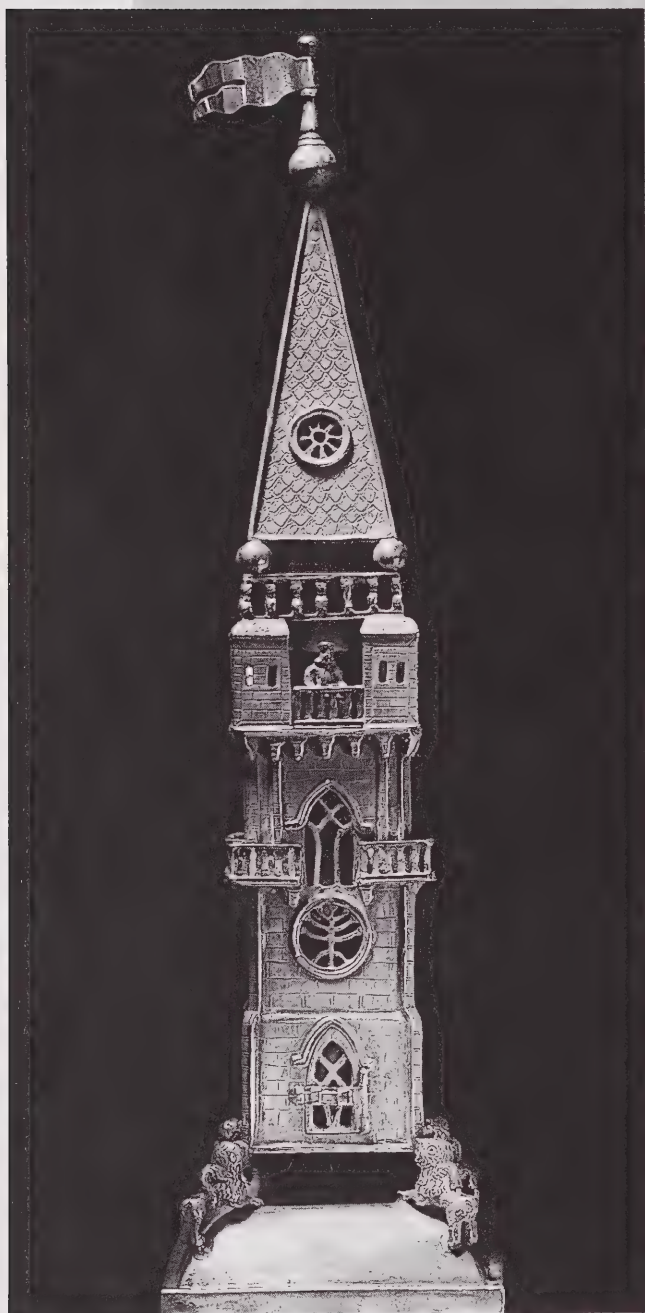


WHITE GOLD:
THE DISCOVERY OF
MEISSEN PORCELAIN
is on display at The
George R. Gardiner
Museum of Ceramic
Art from 5 March
to 8 September 1996.
The exhibition in-
cludes rare examples
of porcelain tea wares
from Meissen and
other sources that are
now in the Gardiner
Museum and
private collections.

THE SWEET SCENT

*The sweet scents
emanating from spice boxes
mark the end
of the Jewish Sabbath*

K. COREY KEEBLE



A 19th-century German silver tower spice box is one of the most elaborate of its kind with its detailed human and animal figures and architectural features. Anonymous collection.



A 19th-century Dutch silver spice box takes the form of a well-known Amsterdam synagogue. An unusual feature is a watch in its miniature facade. Collection of Henry and Bella Muller.

OF SABBATH

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

THE SABBATH IS OBSERVED EACH WEEK IN THE Jewish faith from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. Havdalah is the ceremony to mark the conclusion of the Sabbath. This ritual has a special appeal in its intimacy as a family affair, marked by song, prayer, and the extinguishing of a special candle, a contrast to the lighting of candles on the Friday evening. An important element of the Havdalah ritual is the aroma of herbs and spices that emanate from a small container called a besamim (spice) box. The scent of the spices sweetens the sadness of the sabbath's closing and heightens the contemplative mood.

Besamim boxes, associated exclusively with the Havdalah service, were almost certainly used in Europe as early as the 12th century. They come in many different forms and reflect architectural and artistic styles of the European societies of which the Jewish communities were part. While they are produced in a variety of materials, the most prized are made of silver, sometimes gilded, and sometimes decorated with gems and enamels. Some are very simple; others are highly complex and decorative. Spices were once rare and costly commodities, and so the besamim boxes reflected the preciousness of their contents in both the material and the spiritual sense.

Spice boxes are among the objects from important Toronto Judaica collections on loan to the Museum's European Judaica Gallery. Some of the simplest, made in

K. Corey Keeble is an associate curator in the European Department, Royal Ontario Museum



An 18th-century Polish silver spice box displays the common motif of a bird perched on leaves. Anonymous collection.

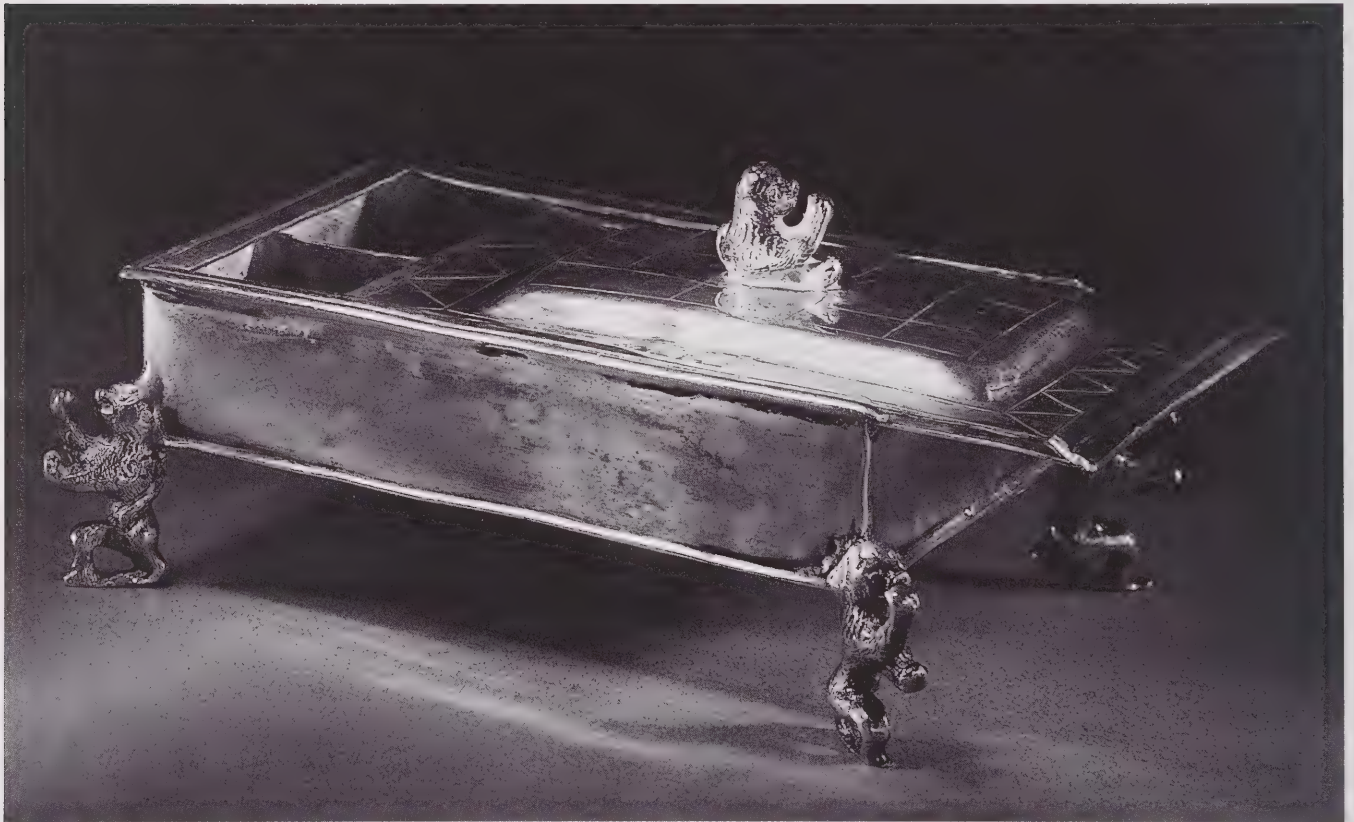
THE SCENT OF THE SPICE SWEETENS THE

Germany during the 1700s, are silver or pewter containers with interior compartments and sliding lids. Their beauty is in the elegance of line and somewhat ornamental corner decoration. An outstanding example at the ROM has corner supports in the form of cast lions, and its lid has a cast sculptural finial.

In the 1800s, many spice boxes were shaped as animals or had extensive animal decoration. Fish-shaped boxes were very popular in the Netherlands, northern Germany, and Scandinavia. Two wriggling dolphins support the body of a striking neo-

classical globular silver box at the Museum, produced in Vienna in 1807. A stork with a tiny frog in its beak forms a finial. Of equal accomplishment is a wonderfully elaborate Polish gilded-silver box. It is shaped as an open basket containing a spray of flowers topped by a tiny bird with gemstone eyes. The stem supporting the basket is actually a coiled spring. A tiny bird perched in leaves is a common motif on many Polish spice boxes.

Distinctive fruit-shaped spice boxes were also common in Poland in the 1800s and probably later. Their forms recall earli-



An 18th-century German silver, footed spice box with drawers. The supports are exquisitely cast lions. Anonymous collection.

SADNESS OF THE SABBATH'S CLOSING...

er works in gold and silver dating back to the late Middle Ages, and in some cases to naturalistic *trompe-l'œil* masterpieces of late gothic and Renaissance silver.

The 19th-century Industrial Revolution had its own influence on the design of Havdalah spice boxes. Boxes shaped as steam locomotives were very popular in central and eastern Europe, especially in Austria, Hungary, and Russia. With some small variations in detail they all took the general form of a filigree cylinder with wheels, simulated smoke stacks, and steam domes.

Spice boxes of architectural form are

among the most eye-catching. One, for example, that takes the form of a well-known Amsterdam synagogue, has polygonal corner towers and tall spires with fluttering flags. An unusual feature of the box is the placement of a watch in its miniature facade.

Among the most complex and ornate architectonic spice boxes are those shaped like spire-capped towers. From an example in the Jewish Museum in New York it is known that they were in use in Europe by the mid 16th century. However, it is possible that they already existed in the 13th century. Such boxes show an astonishing



The design of a late 19th-century silver Russian spice box was influenced by the Industrial Revolution.

The box is in the form of a steam locomotive decorated with outstanding filigree. Anonymous collection.

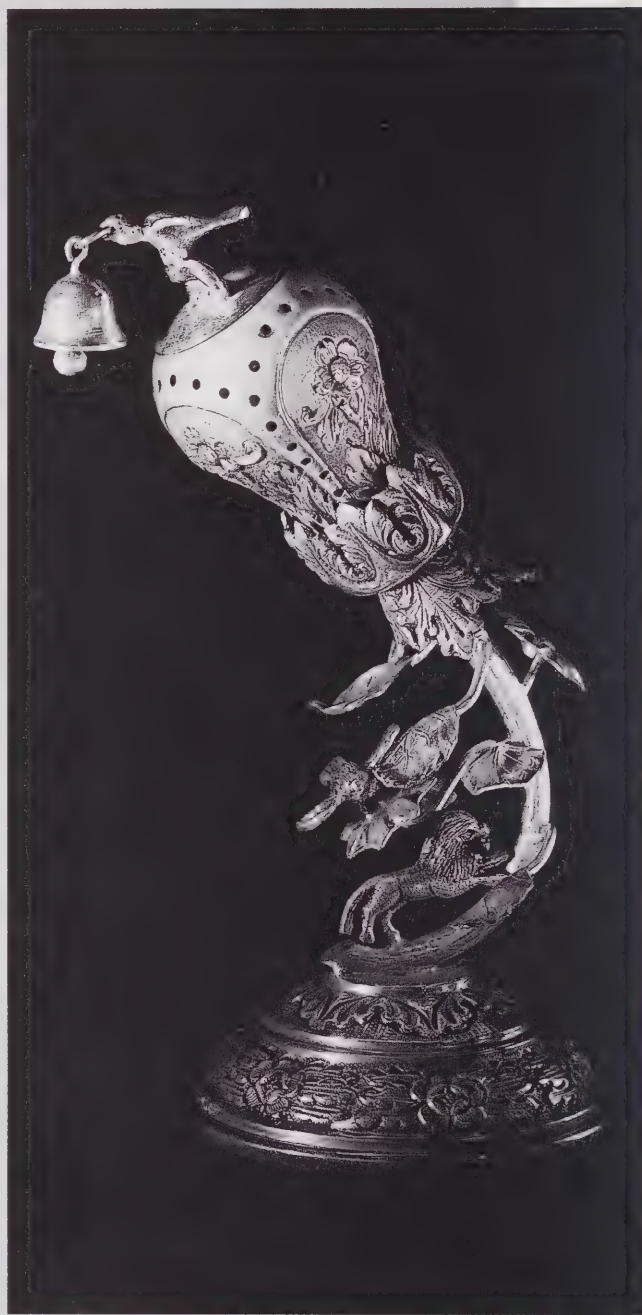
“ AND HEIGHTENS THE MOOD

variety and originality of form and ornament. Many are composed of silver filigree; others are made from sheet silver and may include cast architectural mouldings and sculptures. A few are of pewter. Those that survive are primarily from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland.

Tower-shaped boxes remained in vogue well into the 19th century. While some were inspired by actual buildings, others show a great degree of fantasy and imagination. A German gothic revival box of imposing design, also on loan to the ROM, comprises a tall tower of square section with pierced windows that have elaborate tracery, as well as corner turrets, an open balustraded gallery with miniature figures, and a tall, pyramidal spire topped by a globe finial and flag. It is representative of the most elaborate German architectonic spice-box towers of its period. Even the most ornate and fanciful tower spice boxes are characterized by a pleasing compactness and intimacy of scale.

Enamelled scenes and gems also adorned some European spice boxes, although enamels were a rarity. Enamelling on copper was a German specialty, reaching its height in Augsburg. Spice boxes decorated in this manner are paralleled in the small figure scenes on enamelled copper plaquettes and rondels on 18th-century liturgical metalwork in Russia and Ukraine.

Spice boxes have survived in considerable numbers and are among the most varied and colourful items of Judaica to be found in private and public collections. Their abundance is directly related to their home use over many generations. Though they may be studied as works of art, spice boxes are of great importance as testimony to the continuity and glory of a living faith.✽



A late 19th-century east European silver spice box is shaped like a pear. It is topped by a delicate bird holding a small bell in its beak. Anonymous collection.



A wooden bird from one of the ROM's famous crest poles lies shattered on the floor. It has since been carefully restored and remounted on the pole.

Protecting the Crest Poles

FOUR NORTHERN MEMORIAL CREST poles from British Columbia, standing in the stairwells just beyond the main entrance, are among the most popular sights for visitors to the ROM. The three Nisga'a and one Haida pole have remained virtually untouched since their installation during the construction of the 1931/1933 addition to the Museum.

They date from the mid 1860s, a time of political transition. Britain had created the Crown colony of British Columbia in 1858, which united with the Crown colony of Vancouver Island to become a province in 1866. During this period, missionaries made their first visits into the Nisga'a homelands.

Marius Barbeau, a renowned ethnologist, discovered the poles in the 1920s and acquired them for Charles Trick Currelly, then direc-

tor of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology.

In order to ship the poles to Toronto, Barbeau first had to employ a railroad engineer as well as a crew of Nisga'a men to lower the poles, turn them, and set them on rollers. The poles were put into the waters of the Nass River, floated to sea, and towed to Prince Rupert, the western terminus of the Canadian National Railway.

From there they travelled overland on flat cars and were deposited outside the Museum to await their eventual home in the institution's future east wing. The design of the new wing made special accommodation for the four poles; the actual installation was through the roof before it was completed.

In his 1986 history of the ROM, *The Museum Makers*, Lovat Dickson

recorded that, since the poles had to stay outside for several years, Currelly took steps to protect them from the elements by first soaking them in petroleum until they were thoroughly saturated and then pouring gallons of floor wax over them. They were then wrapped in burlap and stored outside the Museum, on the ground. When they eventually emerged from their wrappings they were perfectly preserved, but black.

The poles have been positioned back to back, which unfortunately creates the illusion that there are only two poles, which were carved front and back. In fact, each of the four poles represents a different family by showing that family's crests with stories that explain how the family acquired its crests. A crest is a symbol of a family's claim to property

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE



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CONSERVATION NOTES CONTINUED

and prestige. Thus, to see a crest pole is to see a record or statement of a family's history, wealth, and prestige.

For nearly 60 years these silent sentinels stood half-obscured in the dimly lit stairwells. Finally they protested. Without warning, on a spring day in May 1993, a bird sculpture that had been attached about halfway up the largest pole, known as the Sakuwan's pole, took flight and came crashing down on the marble floor below.

The shattered bird was carefully gathered up and sent to ROM conservators, who duly documented, cleaned, and fitted it together again like a jigsaw puzzle. This was accomplished with the aid of cold steam directed through a funnel to help refit the pieces in place and a liquid fish glue to keep them correctly positioned. The cleaning revealed traces of paint as well as abalone shells throughout the carving.

The discovery of the decoration as well as the potential overall deterioration of the artifacts prompted a proposal by the conservators to refurbish all four poles.

However, before this process could begin there were five major factors to consider. Cleaning agents had to be strong enough to remove the surface dirt without damaging any valuable surface decoration. The chemicals used in the cleaning agents had to be compatible with a public place—we didn't want to close the Museum because of noxious vapours. Previous treatment with petroleum and wax would have an effect on what cleaning solutions would work. We had to consider what the surface would look like after cleaning—for example, if the poles were over-cleaned they might look patchy. Finally, time was a factor—the scaffolding alone would cost about \$10,000 a month.

Several ideas were considered for treating the poles, and after consulting the curatorial staff in the Ethnology Department and experts in other institutions, the conserva-

tors came up with a cleaning solution of ethanol, water, and detergent. This was developed and tested on a sample area at the base of the tall crest pole. Everyone involved with the project was satisfied with the results and we were ready to proceed.

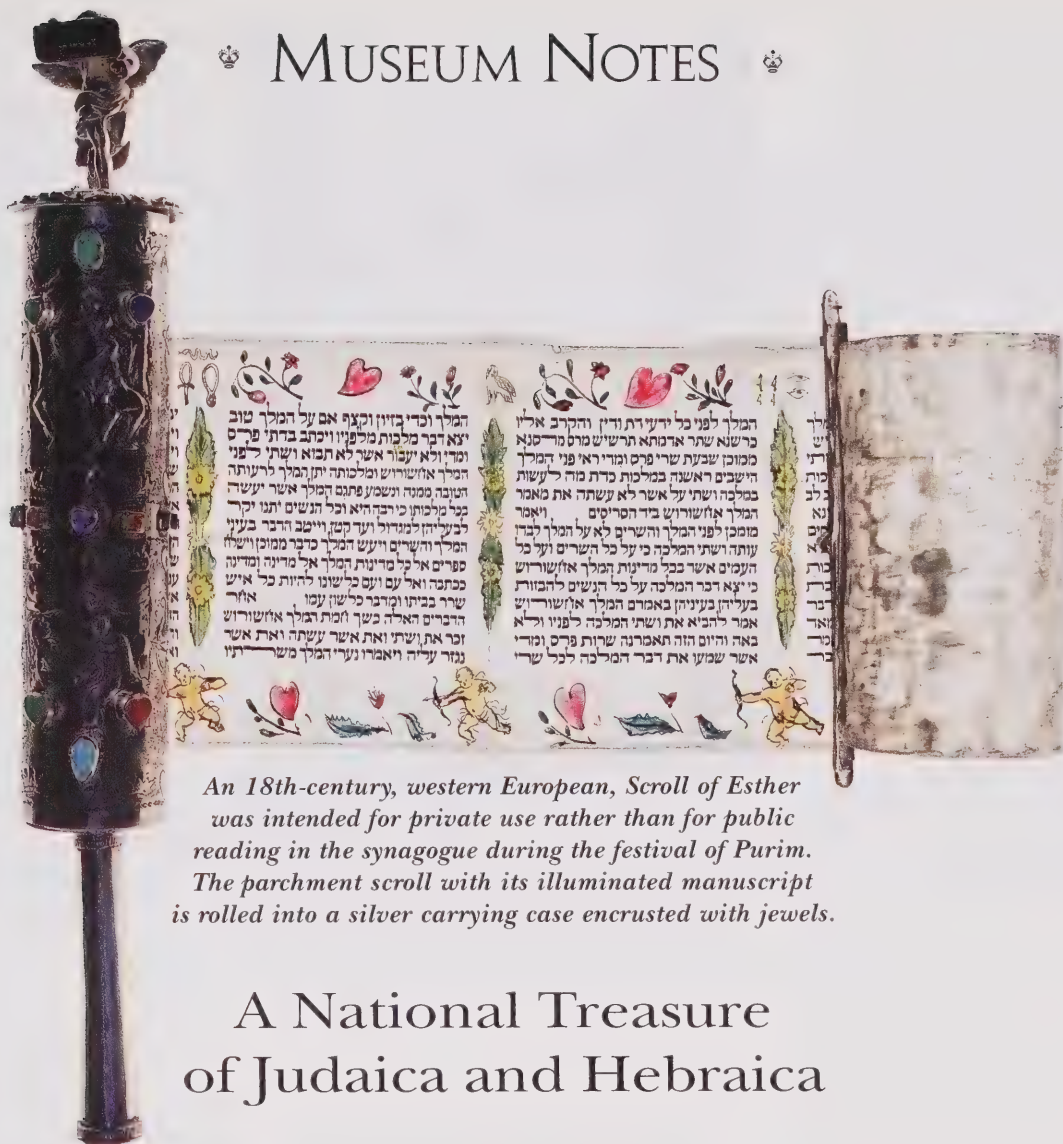
Scaffolding was erected and the poles were treated, two at a time. Our objective was to document, clean, and consolidate the poles. After an initial inspection, the first step was a careful vacuum job. Besides removing the surface dirt, we removed interior areas of dry rot that had turned to sawdust so that we could get at more solid areas for consolidation. The poles were then systematically cleaned with the liquid solution. Small areas were lightly scrubbed with soft brushes, then immediately patted dry with cotton cloth. This process was methodically carried out from top to bottom and then repeated on the front only. We found that a light, dry brushing on the surface after it was dry gave the finish a slightly more uniform look. Areas in need of consolidation were sprayed with a five-per-cent solution of a synthetic resin in ethanol.

During cleaning we were actively looking for paint on the surface. To the delight of the curatorial staff, we were able to locate a few areas, other than the birds, where paint still clung to the exterior of the poles.

Working on these artifacts has given me a new respect for them as works of art. Internationally renowned Haida artist Bill Reid followed our conservation work with interest, especially on the Haida pole, which he singled out as one of the finest examples of its kind in existence. Now that the poles have been cleaned, plans are being drawn to better light and protect them. Hopefully the ROM's crest poles will receive even more of the admiration they so richly deserve.

RAY TOKAREK

Ray Tokarek is a conservator of wooden artifacts at the Royal Ontario Museum



An 18th-century, western European, Scroll of Esther was intended for private use rather than for public reading in the synagogue during the festival of Purim. The parchment scroll with its illuminated manuscript is rolled into a silver carrying case encrusted with jewels.

A National Treasure of Judaica and Hebraica

JACOB LOWY WAS JUST 12 YEARS OLD when, for his devotion to his religious studies, he was awarded a prize by the principal of the Rabbinical College of Bardejov in his native Slovakia. That prize, a book of questions and answers on talmudic subjects, set the young Lowy on a lifelong quest as a talmudic scholar and collector of Hebraica and Judaica. Eventually, he would donate his collection of more than 2000 rare volumes to the National Library of Canada.

Born before the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Lowy began collecting first editions of modern Hebrew literature in central and eastern Europe in the 1930s. Then came the horrors of Nazi Europe and World War II. He lost his father and several other members of his family in Auschwitz. He survived the

evil and escaped to England during Anshlöss. There, and after he emigrated to Canada in 1951, he continued collecting first and rare editions of ancient, medieval, and rabbinic Hebrew literature, the Bible, and other Judaica. The collection, in addition to its religious and scholarly significance, was a link with the world he had lost. So was that first prize. Though it disappeared for more than 30 years during the conflict and upheaval that followed, it was eventually returned to him and became a particularly valued part of his private collection.

That collection was to become one of the top three private collections of rare Hebraica and Judaica in the western hemisphere. It spans a period of more than five centuries and includes close to 40 Hebrew and Latin incunables ("cradle

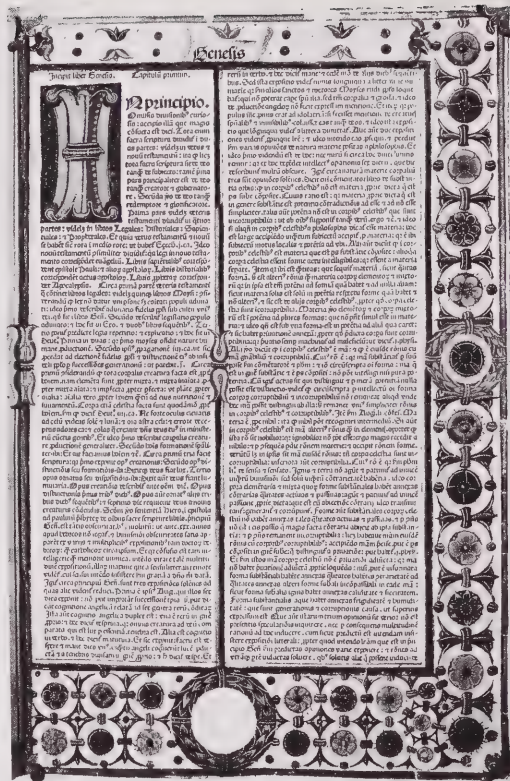
books," produced during the 15th century), more than 100 early and rare editions of the Bible in numerous languages, and various editions and translations of the works of the Jewish historian of antiquity Flavius Josephus. Most of the rest of the collection consists of rare Hebraica from the 16th to the 19th century, including many first editions, and covers all aspects of rabbinic and Hebrew literature printed during the period. As well as examples of Christian Hebraism, Renaissance humanism, and classical scholarship in western Europe, the collection includes works published in Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Balkans, North Africa, Palestine, Asia, and North America. It contains nearly a quarter of all Hebrew books printed during the 16th century, most notably the productions of the great Renais-

sance printers Estienne of Paris, Plantin of Antwerp, and Froben of Basel. It is especially rich in Venetian Hebrew imprints, including the first edition of the Jerusalem Talmud and one of the only complete sets of the Babylonian Talmud printed by Bomberg.

And there is more. Apart from talmudic and midrashic literature, the collection also contains some of the earliest editions of the legal-ritual codes and hundreds of volumes of biblical commentaries; philosophical and mystical works; medieval and post-medieval Hebrew works on medicine, mathematics, and science; historical writings; philology and medieval Hebrew poetry and belles-lettres; liturgy and illustrated editions of the Passover Haggadah; writings from every corner of the Sephardic world; literature of the anti-rabbinic Karaite sect; general rabbinic literature published up to the beginning of the 20th century, including central and east European Hebraica and some Hasidic works; early and rare works in the field of Hebraic bibliography, and Hebraic manuscripts.

The product of some 50 years of dedicated and careful acquisition, the Jacob M. Lowy Collection is the single most valuable gift ever made to the National Library of Canada. It was accepted on behalf of the people and government of Canada by then Secretary of State John Roberts on 12 October 1977, when the Jacob M. Lowy Room housing the collection was officially opened at the National Library, representing the published heritage of more than 14 million Jews—some 300,000 of them in Canada. Subsequent acquisitions have increased the significance of the collection and swelled it to its present 4000 volumes.

Among the acquisitions was a generous gift of bibles, prayer books, and works of religious law from Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto in June 1994. Printed in the main within the



Nicholas de Lyra's 14th-century Postillae Perpetuae form a continuous commentary in this encyclopedic edition of the Latin Bible produced in Venice in 1482 by Franciscus Renner de Heilbronn. This splendid leaf opens de Lyra's commentary to Genesis.

German-speaking regions of western and central Europe, there are items from Lunéville (Lorraine) in the west, Prague and Vienna to the east, as well as books from Karlsruhe, Sulzbach, Fürth, Offenbach, the two Frankfurts, and elsewhere. The end papers of several volumes bear the genealogical inscriptions of generations gone, and are themselves rays of light into the past.

There are a number of recent significant events associated with the Lowy Collection. In 1992, three Lowy volumes were included in *La Vida Judía en Sefarad*, an international exhibition of Hebraica and Judaica in Toledo, Spain. This was one of numerous cultural events commemorating the quinquennial of 1492, the year the Jews were expelled from Spain by royal order. Assembled to display the vast intellectual contribution of medieval Iberian Jewry and to highlight its lasting impact upon Spain during

its formative years, the exhibition was mounted in the 14th-century Sinagoga de El Tránsito, itself a haunting Mudéjar monument to an age of brilliance. The Museo Sefardí is now located within those magnificent premises.

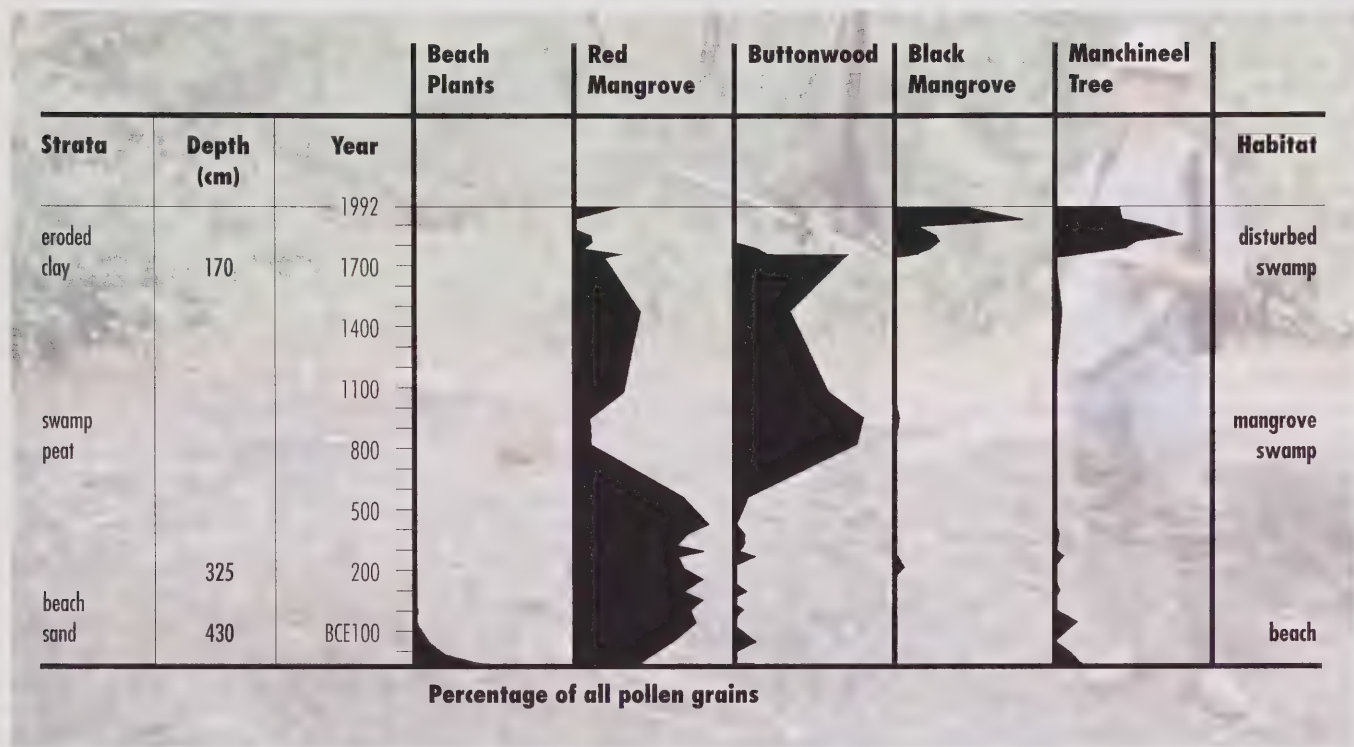
Meanwhile, in Canada, the National Library of Canada and the Sephard '92 Ottawa Committee jointly sponsored an exhibition of Sephardic works from the Lowy Collection, representing the range of intellectual and spiritual concerns that shaped the Iberian Jewish world. A year later, 18 rare original works, supplemented by a travelling exhibit of framed reproductions from the Lowy Collection, were displayed at the Provincial Archives in Winnipeg. In February 1994, works from the collection were featured in *Richesses des influences artistiques*. This series of events, held at the National Library of Canada in conjunction with the French and Moroccan embassies, the University of Ottawa, and the Sephardic Association of Ottawa, was a celebration of the medieval western Mediterranean and the three religions and interconnected cultures—(Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)—that flourished there.

From one small boy's introduction to the Talmud and his lifelong commitment to collecting Hebraica and Judaica, the Jacob M. Lowy Collection at the National Library of Canada has become a scholars' paradise and a national treasure of international significance.

For further information on the Jacob M. Lowy Collection, including arrangements for visits, contact Cheryl Jaffee, curator at the National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4. Telephone: (613) 995-7960. Fax: (613) 952-2895. Internet: cherl.jaffee@nlc-bnc.ca.

IRIS WINSTON

Iris Winston is staff writer at the National Library of Canada



A fossil pollen diagram from sediment that accumulated beneath the mangrove forest in Levera Park. A charcoal-maker's ash pit forms the background.

Habitat History at Levera National Park, Grenada

THE TROPICAL ISLAND NATION OF Grenada in the Caribbean has been developing its natural parks over the past decade. ROM botanists recently conducted a research project in Levera Park along the dry north coast of Grenada, which features a brackish-water pond cut off from the sea by a sand beach. The pond is surrounded by lush mangrove swamp forest, which has been frequently logged for firewood and to make charcoal. Birds, fish, and crabs thrive in this habitat, which is continually enriched by plant debris deposited during high-tide flooding. A special group of tropical trees, the mangroves, are adapted to the wet, salty soil in Levera: both red and black mangrove have roots that reach up out of the soil in search of oxygen, which is scarce in the peaty soil. In this way submerged roots are

able to get the oxygen they need for metabolism. Red mangrove grows best on the pond margin; buttonwood, black mangrove, and manchineel trees, in turn, thrive on progressively drier soils, moving away from the pond. Beneath the mangroves the wet, oxygen-poor soil discourages the decay of dead leaves, so peat accumulates. Sea level has risen in the past several thousand years, and peat accumulation has kept pace; indeed, peat thickness is a useful measure of this sea-level rise.

In 1992 we lifted a sediment core from beneath the mangrove forest. This soil was the subject of a Master's thesis in botany by Melanie Sharman at the University of Toronto. Sharman worked out prehistoric sea-level rise and the history of mangrove logging and agriculture on the surrounding upland.

Our coring devices were essentially pipes, two or five cm in diameter and up to a metre long, with a handle on the end. We selected a dryish coring site surrounded by manchineel trees. To take a core sample, we simply pushed the pipe into the sediment and pulled it back out. The pipe was thus filled with sediment, which was forced out and wrapped, later to be taken to the Museum for fossil-pollen analysis. The pipe was then reinserted into the hole to take the next core segment; we continued to extract successively deeper core segments in the same manner until we were stopped by dense sand. The core eventually penetrated through organic clay and peat to the beach sand at a depth of 430 cm.

Back in the laboratory, pea-sized samples were taken at 10-cm intervals

along the core, and fossil pollen grains in them were concentrated for identification and counting under the microscope. Identifications were made by comparing the samples with pollen grains taken from flowers of the trees now growing in Levera Park. At least 100 pollen grains were counted per interval, and percentages of each flower type were calculated and graphed in ascending order from the deepest level to the upper core segment. The graphed results dramatically illustrate how percentage trends over the 2000 years reflect the succession in the forest that resulted from changes in the environment.

Since our core was rich in organic carbon, sections from three levels were radiocarbon dated. Adjusting the dates to calendar years by comparing our data with data from radiocarbon-dated tree rings we concluded that the brackish pond at Levera Park was a sandy bay until it was cut off from the sea 2000 years ago. From that time peat accumulated beneath red mangrove and buttonwood, keeping pace with the sea level, which rose about two metres.

About 300 years ago the site underwent a sudden change: red mangrove and buttonwood became much less plentiful, and black mangrove and manchineel trees, which had previously been rare, now flourished. This succession was accompanied by—perhaps caused by—the deposition of almost two metres of clay that eroded from the surrounding upland during the bygone days of sugar-cane plantations. This clay nearly fills the pond, which today is only three metres deep. Scrubby pasture has since replaced the sugar-cane fields, reducing the erosion of the clay, and as climate warms in the next century, we anticipate that sea level will rise accordingly and quickly flood the black mangrove forest, returning the habitat to the red mangrove.

JOHN H. McANDREWS
John H. McAndrews is curator in the Botany Department, Royal Ontario Museum



Dear ROM Answers,

Enclosed are some photos of an old china plate that belonged to my aunt, who died in 1982 at 85 years of age. I have no idea how or where she got this plate. It is 25.4 cm (10 inches) in diameter and appears to be handpainted, including the brushed gold border.

The sculpted three-dimensional edges are scalloped and fluted. The

back of the plate bears a symmetrical marking or insignia that appears to be either a two-headed winged creature or two such creatures side by side. Above this graphic are the letters "M.Z." and below it the word "Austria." Circled in the centre back of the plate are the numbers "24," printed vertically, and "933," printed horizontally beneath.

If you possess furniture, silver, glass, metalwork, ceramics, textiles, or small decorative objects that may have an interesting past and have aroused your curiosity, this column is for you. Send a clear black-and-white photograph (or 35-mm colour slide) of the object against a simple background, providing dimensions, a description, any markings, or any known details of its history to: ROM Answers, c/o Rotunda Magazine, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6. Be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope large enough to include any photos that we must return to you with the reply.

Neither Rotunda nor the author nor any other person who may be consulted assumes any legal responsibility for these opinions or their ramifications. No financial appraisals will be offered. If your query is selected to be published in the column, only your initials and city will appear, in order to protect your privacy. Letters will be acknowledged as staff time comes available.

I would be very grateful if you could tell me anything at all about this piece of china and its relative worth.

Thank you very much.

J. M.
VANCOUVER

Dear J.M.,

Thank you for your letter. Judging from the photographs, your plate is a fairly typical example of Continental porcelain made for export around 1900. The presence of the name of the country of origin in the mark dates it to after 1891, when the U.S. Congress and the British Parliament passed laws requiring all imports to bear that information. The "M.Z." with the double-headed Austrian eagle was a trademark of the firm of Moritz Zdekauer of Alt-Rohrau, Bohemia (today part of the Czech Republic), between c. 1900 and 1920. The Zdekauer firm exported large quantities of popularly priced ceramics to Canada, and pieces bearing their marks turn up quite often. The very pretty roses and the gold borders are transfer prints, an inexpensive form of decoration, somewhat like decals. The shaded green was likely spray-painted on. The other markings that you describe likely have something to do with factory production or the model number. Such plates are not so valuable that they need to be appraised for insurance purposes, but they are much prized nowadays as accent pieces in interior decorating.

Without any information, it is difficult to say anything about the small metal items in your other photograph. None of them appears to be valuable enough to be appraised for insurance purposes. The small mesh purse may be the most collectible. It could well be sterling silver and looks as though it might be a type that dates to around 1910. It may be marked on the mounts; if so, it could be American or made for the U.S. market. The button hook was used with women's high-button boots or even gloves and is part of a manicure/dresser set. The handle is

likely sterling silver and the set is of the type manufactured in the U.S. The bracelet appears to be in the Art Déco style and may date to the 1920s or 1930s, when heavy, ornate bracelets were favourite evening wear over long gloves. The bell is likely Indian brass and quite recent. Similar brass with engraved and painted decoration is still available in Indian stores. I can't see the thimble or the small box clearly enough to make any suggestions. If the box is a compact, it likely dates to after 1920, when it became acceptable in polite society for a woman to carry make-up.

PETER KAELGREN
EUROPEAN DEPT., ROM

Dear ROM Answers,

I enclose some photographs of a desk that belonged to my mother. Family tradition has it that the piece once belonged to one of Canada's governors-general. I would be very grateful if you could tell me the date of the desk and the likelihood of its gubernatorial past.

As you can see from the photograph, it is a handsome piece with five drawers opening on the side, and a sloping top, which opens over a space for storing writing materials. Its measurements are 68 cm wide, 59 cm deep, and 84 cm high. The wood is probably walnut. Some drawers are constructed with small dowels; the smallest is dovetailed.

I do not know how the desk came into my mother's possession. She was born in London, Ontario, in 1905, grew up in Brampton, and attended the University of Toronto, where after her graduation she was an assistant in the history department to Lester B. Pearson. She was a niece of H. H. Fudger, a Toronto entrepreneur who with A. E. Ames and J. W. Flavell purchased and developed the Robert Simpson Company. These details might give you some clues in your researches.

I would appreciate any help you can give me.

Yours sincerely,

I. H.
PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

Dear I. H.,

Thank you for your letter and the excellent photographs. You own what is commonly referred to as a davenport desk. This type of desk came into production around 1800, when a wide variety of convenient pieces of furniture were being introduced. Apparently a record survives for such a desk ordered by a Captain Davenport from the prominent furniture manufacturer Gillows of Lancaster. The earliest davenport desks rarely survive and seem to have been considerably higher. In fact, in some cases, one could stand in front of them to write or read.

The essential characteristics of a davenport desk are a slanting writing surface, which is hinged near the upper, far edge and very often covered in leather with a stamped gold border; a storage area under the writing surface, sometimes with pigeon holes or other compartments at the far side; brackets to support the storage box, which projects out over the drawer section; and drawers at one or both sides, in some instances a cupboard on one side, or "dummy" drawers that do not open but provide symmetry. The wood was finished on all sides but the end opposite the writing surface was usually left plain.

Your davenport desk appears to be a typical Victorian variant that has survived in fairly large numbers. The Victorian form is shorter and more substantial than the original ones. The plain, higher side will be about 76 cm (30 inches) tall. Victorian examples were often equipped with casters to make them easier to move. The wheels of the casters can be wood, brass, or white or brown glazed ceramic. The casters are usually recessed slightly into the understructure so that you can see them only if you look carefully. The Victorian examples correspond in style to the period 1840 to 1880 and followed the taste of fine parlour furniture, which ranged from Rococo Revival through Renaissance Revival and ultimately to the Eastlake style. The best early davenport desks

might be made of walnut with veneers of fine Circassian walnut with a shaded grain somewhat like a very complex cloud of smoke. Walnut, mahogany, and occasionally oak were used for the parts that showed. Drawers and other less visible parts of the structure might be constructed from pine or other less expensive woods. These small desks were made in both Britain and North America. I have never seen a marked example or one that could be attributed to a specific cabinetmaker or factory.

Judging from your photographs, the style and finish suggest to me that yours was made in North America, which means either Canada or the United States. I would agree that the wood is likely to be walnut. The scrolled brackets supporting the storage section and the large, leafy, carved-wood pulls correspond to the popular interpretation of the rococo revival style in furniture, suggesting to me that the desk dates from about 1860 to 1870. The pulls do not appear to be the most ornate, fashionable, or expensive versions; they are among the plainer ones of their type that I have seen. The desk seems nevertheless to be well and solidly constructed with some care having been exercised in the proportions and the mouldings. Money was apparently spent on locks rather than the drawer pulls.

If you look inside the small, square, long drawer with the mushroom knob, just to the inner angle of the bracket, you should find ink stains or even evidence of small compartments just behind the front. Small bottles of black and red



ink and quill or straight pens would have been kept in this drawer. This type of drawer can be found on writing tables made between about 1800 and about 1850. Later examples sometimes have a rectangular well with a hinged cover for pens and inkwell in the flat part of the surface beyond the hinge at the far edge.

The small Victorian davenport desks are usually considered to have been made for women. You would have to sit in a chair with a low seat to use one. I suspect that many have survived because they were pretty parlour furniture but not very practical and therefore saw only limited use. Larger and more robust versions of this type of desk are built into the Commons and Senate chambers of the Houses of Parliament, Ottawa. I have never found any evidence to support a comment that I once heard that they were

made for women to use on steamships. Like many stories about antiques, that seems to be pure fantasy.

Many middle-class and wealthy people would have owned desks of this type during the 1800s. Rideau Hall was furnished with fairly standard furniture during the Victorian period, and a desk of this quality would not have been out of keeping with the house. But to associate it with a particular governor general or his family you would have to find solid evidence, such as photographs of known room interiors or a detailed description in an inventory or will. You may want to write to Mr. Harvey Slack, Executive Director, The Canadiana Fund, P. O. Box 682, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 5P7. Mr. Slack is involved in the furnishing of Rideau Hall and the other official residences. He or one of the researchers associated with the project may be able to determine whether a desk like yours appears in any of the photographs of Rideau Hall interiors. There is also at least one book published on Rideau Hall that includes some early photos of the interiors. It may be available through your local public library.

Thank you for sharing your davenport desk with our readers. It is one of the more distinctive forms in Victorian furniture; a walnut example in the Eastlake style, dating to about 1865-1885, is on display with other parlour furniture in the south wing of the Samuel European Galleries at the Royal Ontario Museum.

PETER KAELEGREN
EUROPEAN DEPT., ROM

Alchemy, Male-midwifery, Canadian Art, Naturalists, and more...

THE SUPPOSED SECRETS OF ALCHEMY—the mystical pseudo-science that sought to change lead into gold and silver—are scattered throughout European archives and libraries, in hundreds of works, most of them written in Arabic, Syrian, Greek, and Latin. One of the most important collections is at the British Library at London. So extensive are the holdings there that Gareth Roberts has drawn on them exclusively for his fascinating and informative study, **The Mirror of Alchemy: Alchemical Ideas and Images in Manuscripts and Books from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century** (University of Toronto Press, \$55 cloth, \$24.95 paper). This book is a fine introduction to the history of an idea that had a surprisingly long and influential life, for though it is wrapped in a shroud of mystery and intrigue—that is part of its appeal—alchemy was really the story of early chemistry through the Middle Ages and up to the time of the Renaissance. Indeed, after the 16th century the Arabic article *al* was dropped and the word became simply *chemistry*.

In myth, religion, and legend, the secret of transforming base metals into precious metals is variously the preserve of Moses or fallen angels or even Adam himself. But the most common notion is connected with the Greek god Hermes, son of Maia and Zeus and consort of Aphrodite—and the inventor of fire and music. Medieval alchemists spoke of their work as the “hermetic art” and they used Hermes’ sign or seal on their possessions (hence

our phrase *hermetically sealed*).

On the historical evidence, what seems most probable is that the idea of alchemy was Greek, bound up with Aristotle’s view that all life consisted of four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—and that the Arabs picked it up from the Greeks in Egypt. From there it spread through Arabic Spain to the rest of Europe by means of Latin translations. Chaucer was acquainted with alchemical problems, to judge from his writings, and so, towards the end of alchemy’s heyday, was Shakespeare.

The basic idea of alchemy, taking off from Aristotle, is that all matter is derived from one substance, the *prima materia*, from which others are created by adding or subtracting ingredients. The *prima materia* was thought to be mercury (named of course for Hermes’ opposite number in Roman mythology). And not common mercury, but mercury from which the Aristotelian elements had been expunged and replaced with sulphur. Again, not ordinary sulphur, but the elusive “philosopher’s stone,” sometimes described as an elixir. Once one possessed the philosopher’s stone, apparently, it was simply a matter of adding white powder to produce silver or red to produce gold. The ratio of base metal to new artificial gold was usually given as 50:1 or 60:1.

There is a sense, Roberts writes, in which, like “the history of witchcraft...the history of alchemy is ‘the history of an error,’ and some historians of science regarded alchemy as an unfortunate dream from

which chemistry fortunately struggled awake.” Elsewhere he writes: “This history of alchemy is similar to other mythic constructions in western culture of a golden age of knowledge, religion, science, poetry or music: knowledge was always perfect or at least fuller or more pristine in the distant past.” The grass is always greener on someone else’s grave, so to speak. Yet it’s also true, as Roberts points out, that the golden age of Arabic science and learning corresponded with the Dark Ages of Europe, and that alchemy, to be understood, must be seen in this perspective—as a relative of astrology and a necessary precursor to the Enlightenment.

Alchemy still intrigues some of our contemporaries and near-contemporaries. Carl Jung, for instance, pondered the existence of the philosopher’s stone off and on for 50 years before concluding that it never existed. By contrast, Clark Heinrich, apparently one of the more serious American researchers into phenomenology and mysticism considered as part of comparative religion, is convinced that the search for the philosopher’s stone generated a set of beliefs with the strength of something tangible. He believes it informed ancient religions in India as well as Judaism and the larger portion of Judaism’s most successful offshoot, Christianity. Heinrich lays out his complicated theory in **Strange Fruit: Alchemy and Religion—the Hidden Truth** (Little, Brown Canada, \$29.95).

All the hocus-pocus began to give way in the 18th century under the

onslaught of scientific progress, particularly in medicine, though of course empirical knowledge was still tangled up with superstition and mistaken theories of the universe. Certainly medicine was deficient in anything we would call technological expertise. Drawing on many contemporary descriptions, Guy Williams shows just how dreadful—literally, full of dread—medical science was in **The Age of Agony: The Art of Healing, 1700-1800** (Scholarly Book Services, \$12 paper).

One's first challenge in life was to survive birth, and this part of medical history has been studied closely in recent years, particularly by feminist social historians. But Adrian Wilson throws an unusual light on the matter in **The Making of Man-midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770** (Harvard University Press, US\$35). He argues in effect that when magicians and alchemists turned into scientists and chemists the result was a professional hegemony that excluded the local women who by ancient tradition had assisted in delivering the children of their female relatives and neighbours. Also, there is an interesting chapter on childbirth, birthing-chairs, and birthing-rooms in **Elizabethan Households: An Anthology**, edited by Lena Cowen Orlin (University of Washington Press, US\$24.95 paper).

The trend back to midwifery, which we've heard so much about in recent years, is in fact a reaction to the change described by Wilson, in which women themselves first rejected the traditional midwives and began to insist on what Wilson calls man-midwives, who evolved into obstetrical specialists.

SOME OTHER NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST to *Rotunda* readers:

- Surely all visitors to the Royal Ontario Museum are familiar with the work of the artist Paul Kane (1810-1871), for the Museum owns more than 100 of his paintings of aboriginal life on the Prairies in the 1840s, a bequest from George Allan

(who also gave Allan Gardens to Toronto). After travelling all the way to the Pacific and back, Kane had more than 500 sketches of Cree life, the workings of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the scenery of the fur trade country, and he spent the next couple of decades working them up as paintings in his (still-standing) house and studio on Wellesley Street in Toronto.

Nicholas Flood Davin, founder of the *Regina Leader*, was probably the first to observe that whereas Kane's sketches have a freshness and immediacy, the paintings themselves tended to come out like European genre pictures. "The Indian horses are Greek horses," Davin complained, "and the landscape too is idealized." Most later commentators, such as J. Russell Harper, have agreed. How good it is, then, to have Diane Eaton and Sheila Urbanek's book **Paul Kane's Great Nor-West** (UBC Press, \$39.95), which retells the story of Kane's explorations and reproduces the sketches in the light of contemporary scholarship and modern opinion.

- Patrick D. Lester's massive (and bargain-priced) **Biographical Directory of Native American Painters** (University of Oklahoma Press, US\$49.95) will be of considerable use to Canadians, as it includes First Nations artists on this side of the border. The entry on Norval Morrisseau, to take an obvious example, occupies one full quarter page, and includes biographical information, publications, exhibitions, and a list of holdings by public galleries and museums. Such a valuable reference book has been needed for quite a while.

- Art books that are essentially exhibition catalogues, it seems to me, usually need some added dimension to justify their existence, independent of the show for which they have been planned. One that I believe succeeds in this way is **The Art of Mary Pratt** by Tom Smart (Goose Lane, \$65), the offspring of a large exhibition that was organized by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton (Pratt's birthplace) and then

toured nationally. Pratt, who studied under Alex Colville, is married to Christopher Pratt, and has lived most of her life in a Newfoundland outpost; she was the most important woman painter of the school called variously magic realists, super-realists, or new realists, which reached the apogee of fashion in the 1970s, about the time that Pratt came to Canada-wide attention. Many of her watercolours and oils, shown here chronologically, demonstrate the current re-evaluation of domestic subjects as suitable subject matter for art.

- People who have never actually seen them tend to believe that the Northern Lights must be either a figure of speech or a cheap special effect. Candance Savage's book **Aurora: The Mysterious Lights** (Douglas & McIntyre, \$25) contains many of her remarkable photographs, as well as archival images and a sensible, accessible, and informative text. *Aurora* would make a perfect gift for someone living in more southerly climes.

In general, though, Canada has always seemed to be, in publishing terms, a much over-photographed country. Maybe it's just that we have very high standards because of the constant bombardment of landscape imagery. In any case, *Satellite Images*, a collection of colourful, high-resolution photographs of rural and urban Canada from kilometres overhead, with a text by Brian Banks, was genuinely fascinating when it appeared originally in 1989. It has lost none of its intrinsic appeal in the new paperback edition called **Canada from Space**, which has a crisp graphic look by that talented eastern Ontario designer, Linda Menyers (Firefly Books, \$19.95).

- **The Fourth Coast: Exploring the Great Lakes Coastline from the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota** (Penguin Canada, \$16.99) is by an American writer, Mary Blocksma. With only brief exceptions, she keeps to her own side of the border, resisting the temptation to stray into a different

society a few miles distant. Yet she's thorough, consistent, and informative about the territory she chooses.

- At the other extreme of vegetation, **Tales from the Jungle: A Rainforest Reader**, edited by Daniel R. Katz and Miles Chapin (Random House Canada, \$21 paper), is a surprisingly and eminently readable collection of reactions to the tropical rainforest by writers and travellers as different in time and attitude as H. M. Stanley and Pablo Neruda, Theodore Roosevelt and Graham Greene, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Joseph Conrad, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Toronto-born naturalist John Hemingway (son of Ernest). This is a nice example of the anthologist's art, melding the obscure and the inevitable into a browsable book with a serious purpose.

- Another anthology with something of the same air is **American Women Afield: Writings by Pioneering Women Naturalists** edited by Marcia Myers Bonta (UBC Press, \$23.95 paper). The subtitle explains it all. The contents are arranged chronologically, from Susan Fenimore Cooper (1813-1894), a now-obscure precursor to Henry David Thoreau (and daughter of that dreadful novelist, James Fenimore Cooper), to Rachel Carson (1907-1964), whose book *Silent Spring* was in so many ways the beginning of today's environmentalist movement.

- **Log Houses: Canadian Classics** by Peter Christopher and Richard Skululis (Stoddart, \$40) is not another work about building your own log cabin or indeed about log cabins at all. *Chalet* is probably the lowliest term that could be applied to any of the structures photographed or written about in this book, which takes seriously, in architectural terms, those people who have moved building with logs beyond vernacular traditions into the realm of contemporary design. Some of the examples are stunning in their coziness.

DOUGLAS FETHERLING

Douglas Fetherling is book review editor of Rotunda

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❖ LOOK AGAIN ❖



Not a Decoy

THIS HEADDRESS, WORN BY THE MASKEGAN OR SWAMPY CREE, CONSISTS OF A loon skin lined with wool tartan and a peak made of rawhide tinted most likely with laundry blueing. The eyes of the loon have been replaced with what appear to be brass upholstery tacks. Its head is stuffed with human hair, which according to Cree beliefs, could be charged with supernatural powers. The headdress was collected by Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris while he was negotiating the North-West Angle Treaty at Lake of the Woods in 1873, and became part of the ROM's ethnology collections through the Edmund Morris bequest. ❖

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN BOYLE



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